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The Gospel at Work In Modern Life

ROBERT WHITAKER



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The Gospel at Work
in
Modern Life

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By
Robert Whitaker

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE social influence of Christianity is being recognized to-day in a manner and to a degree that would surprise Christian workers of a generation ago. In keeping with this tendency, the Baptist Young People's Union of America has arranged its courses of study to provide for the needs of young people in the direction of this new emphasis of Christian thought. The purpose of this book is to serve as studies in the Sacred Literature Course in young people's societies. The subject has been chosen because of its practical character, and the relation of its parts to individual life.

It is a matter of gratification to the Committee to be able to offer to young people's societies the course of studies in this book, at the same time so practical, so timely, and so deeply interesting. The author, who has given much of his life to a consideration of the questions discussed and has won for himself a reputation for thoroughness and candor, has herein given some of his best thoughts in a most pleasing style.

The course has been shortened in respect to the number of lessons, so that it now consists of twelve instead of twenty or twenty-five as in former years.

GEORGE T. WEBB.

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THE GOSPEL AT WORK IN MODERN LIFE

CHAPTER I

THE MODERN CHRISTIAN'S PROBLEMS

IN the large library room of the Leland Stanford, Jr., University, at Palo Alto, Cal., at almost any hour of the day, several score of students may be found conning their lessons, making notes, or browsing over some book just withdrawn from the adjacent shelves. High above them, on the western wall, is a large art-glass window, whence the light falls upon the bowed heads of the students from the benignant face of a medieval saint, Thomas à Kempis, the reputed author of the best-known book of devotional meditations which the Christian centuries have produced. The garb and face alike proclaim the monk, and the presence there of the great ascetic's figure is sufficient reminder to those at all familiar with the words of his confession, printed under his picture in one of the galleries of the Old World: "Everywhere I sought quiet, and found it nowhere else than in solitude and amongst books."

Could the old monk himself take the place for an hour of that calm, illuminated face which, in

immovable complacency, looks down upon the Stanford students of this very modern world, after what manner would his meditations move to-day? How would he write now for the young men and young women coming and going in the reading-room below concerning his great theme, "The imitation of Christ?" Or what have all the changes that have come to pass in the four hundred and forty years since he died to do with the working of the gospel in the lives of men?

It may be granted that it was no dull age in which Thomas à Kempis lived, and that his was not an average life. He was contemporary with John Hus, and Jerome of Prague, and Savonarola, men of very different temper from his, borne through a far more tempestuous career. Gutenberg, to whom the invention of the art of printing is generally allowed, shared the century with à Kempis, and printed his first Bible about twenty years before à Kempis died. It was the age of the "Maid of Orleans" in France, of "The Wars of the Roses" in England, of the famous or infamous Medici family in Italy, and the closing years of à Kempis saw the fateful marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain. With none of these things did à Kempis concern himself, and they might have happened upon another planet so far as the great mystic had to do with them. But whether we think of the monk, à Kempis, or of the martyr, Hus, or of the soldier-saint, Joan of Arc, or of any other of the

remembered figures of four and more centuries ago, as looking down from that sunset window upon the youth of our time, we are thinking of men and women almost as far away from the things that interest and perplex us as we seem ourselves to the sober minded among us from actual intercourse and exchange of ideas with the hypothetical inhabitants of Mars.

We are not seeking quiet now, and few of us are seeking solitude. Our very books have become the clamorous voices of the unrest of our day. Our ideal of the saintly life has changed. We reverence the mystics, in art glass, but our own heart's saints are the men of strenuous life. We read the words of à Kempis somewhat as we look upon the window there, touched with the glory of the westering sun, with a certain sensitive enjoyment of its rich coloring and artistic lines, feeling in a way the delicate hues of his words and the fine tracery of his thought. But we turn from it all to our tasks which are lighted after all by the colder light that flows in through unadorned windows, or perchance the nearer glow of the electric light. And sometimes the "imitation of Christ" seems itself as unreal as the figures wrought in art glass yonder on the walls, and as far removed from the conditions of our ordinary life as the glowing electric bulb from the shadowy cell of the medieval monk.

It is fortunate for our faith that there is a greater distance between Jesus and à Kempis than there is

between à Kempis and us. At first the distance seems to our disadvantage, for in point of time Jesus is farther away yet. But not in point of contact with our lives. Jesus was no ascetic. He lived his life emphatically among men. He was with them at the wedding feast, and dined familiarly with them at the banquet table. The plowman, the sower, and the harvester, the fisherman, and all the common round of daily toil and ordinary interests furnished him with the imagery of his speech. The common people heard him gladly because he was of their number and kept always his intimacy with their lives. He was called "a wine-bibber and a glutton" by reason of his easy and natural associations with the rich, and "a friend of publicans and sinners" by reason of his democratic associations with the poor. Jesus was preeminently a "mixer" among men. This was more than half of his offensiveness to the professionally religious of his day. It is increasingly his attractiveness to the men and women of our time who have discernment enough to pierce the thinner atmosphere of religious professionalism now.

Yet, even Jesus is far away from the modern Christian's problems if we do not guard ourselves as to what we mean by the "imitation of Christ." It is not enough that we do not mean an imitation of à Kempis rather than Christ. It is easy enough to see that the issue is not for us, How shall we live the life of Thomas à Kempis to-day? There

may have been much to excuse it and justify it in the age in which à Kempis lived. But neither for that age nor for any other age was it the life which Jesus lived. It was radically different in principle. The ideal of à Kempis was isolation. The ideal of Jesus was incarnation. Thomas à Kempis did not imitate Jesus. He did but imitate certain moods and tenses of the Christian life. And there is danger even in the imitation of Jesus himself if we mistake the letter of his example for the lordship of his spirit and his life. Jesus' teaching is just as vital for us in substance as it was for the men and women with whom he shared the fashions and customs of a distant day. His was the timelessness of absolute truth. It is part of his timelessness that he spoke little of the "problems" of his own generation. But his life was, nevertheless, of that generation. The very humanness with which he lived, and the fact that he spoke not according to the abstractions of mystics or philosophers, but in the terms of everyday life as he actually saw it, and shared it, compel us to go behind the letter of his saying and doing if we are to translate his truth into a like union with the life of our day. He saved the life of his age by entering into it and becoming part of it. We shall not save the life of our generation by getting away from it in the effort to realize closer fellowship with him through an impossible union with conditions which have long since passed away. His ideal for us is neither the isolation of the medieval monk, nor

the imitation of the forms of his own earthly ministry, but the transfusion of his life into us and through us into the forms and customs and institutions of our day. Thomas à Kempis would make candles of us all, burning in golden candlesticks of secluded devotion before the altars of a dead Christ. Jesus would make of every one of us a "live wire" in our own generation, electric with the divine grace and goodness which were in him, carrying the might and mystery of the heavens to the humblest hamlet in the land with a glow which the palaces of the past could not command, and drawing from every river and rivulet of the rushing life of our time the power which men of old worshiped with fearful faces afar off as it flashed and thundered in the skies, that we may minister of and through that power to the enlargement and enrichment of all the life of the world.

Therefore, the foremost problem of the modern Christian is the Christian's first problem in every generation—to translate the timeless truth of Jesus, not the temporary forms of that truth, into the most convincing and commanding terms of contemporary life. And it is especially the problem of youth, because to youth especially belongs the life of to-day.

The problem has always been both one and many. It was never so manifold and complex as it is to-day. Life has always met youth and faith with the challenge of change and enlargement. But the change was never so rapid and so varied, and the enlarge-

ment never so trying to judgment and courage as is the case in this century in which we live. Often and again there has been need of intellectual readjustment to meet the conditions of expanding knowledge. It was even before the beginnings of Christianity that one wrote the familiar complaint, "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh." Yet, for every student the world knew then, it knows a thousand now, and we burn up more printed matter every morning in starting our fires than all the laborious copyists of that ancient day could write down from year's end to year's end. If the discoveries of a Galileo seemed to the men of the medieval world to threaten the very foundations of the faith, what of the vastly more disturbing upheavals which have broken the crust of every province of education in our time, and tumbled down great cities of painstakingly builded traditions wherein men have lived and wrought for centuries? If the world of thought was stirred to restlessness when the pioneers of research went forth a day's journey with their ox-cart conveyances into the unexplored regions beyond their Alleghanies what of conviction and conjecture now when men pass from sea to sea within a week and investigation goes with the swiftness and force of a modern express train, or challenges the lightness and celerity of the birds in their own atmosphere? Never was the problem so acute as it is to-day for those who would keep

their faith and would keep also abreast of knowledge. Never was it so easy to throw old truth away by reason of the pressure of new opinion. Never did the fellowship with Jesus require such nice discrimination as it does now on the intellectual side between the changing terms in which we think of all externals from documents to doctrines and the essential changelessness of all that pertains to the inner life of truth. Yet, nowhere is the gospel more triumphantly at work in modern life than in demonstrating the difference between faith and intellectual form.

Nor was ever the problem of poverty or plenty so pressing as it is to-day. There is more in this modern world to tempt the young Christian, especially, to forsake the "mind of Christ" for mammonism than even the ages of buccaneering knew. For our necessities are more than the luxuries of our fathers, and their affluence is less than competence for us. Not only are the manifest rewards immeasurably greater for the successful now, but the area of success has enlarged quite as much as the area of education, and the common man has access to the adventures of wealth beyond even the degree of his access to the once exclusive fields of knowledge. Mammonism is not only more democratic than it was of old, hobnobbing now with all classes and conditions of men, and holding out an inviting hand to the street urchin as well as to the prince, but mammonism is more respectable and

much more religious. Nowhere is the problem of adjustment between a faithful following of the Christ and participation in the life of this present world more difficult to-day than it is with respect to the Christian's attitude toward wealth. We have taken the rich young ruler into the church, and are holding him up as an example of achievement and rare opportunity. Yet the gospel was never more mightily at work for the overthrow of mammonism than it is in the hearts of multitudes of Christians to-day.

The problem of pleasure, like the problem of profit, is vastly increased and intensified. The field of knowledge has not more enlarged than the field of what is popularly called fun. There is no more serious obstacle to the growth of the kingdom of God among us than the levity of the age. Religion has profited by the growth of cheerfulness. But counterfeit cheerfulness is more costly to a people than counterfeit currency. A vast amount of our humor is not humor at all, but vicious vulgarity, as witness our Sunday supplements. Recreation is the next neighbor to regeneration, as the very form of the word implies, but to confound it with dissipation is as dangerous as to mistake a reef for the entrance to a harbor. One of the largest problems of the Christian life of the day, and preeminently of the young Christian life of this generation, is the redemption of the vast new provinces which have been added within recent

times to the once comparatively meager and barren domain of diversion and delight.

And how is the whole field of conscience expanded to-day! What problems the growth of modern industrialism presents to the man who would determine his ways by the spirit of Christ. How easy is it to be individually honest, and kind, and even generous, and to be socially void of Christian conscience and as fractionally irresponsible as was the savage in his primitive individual way. What bigger problem has any age had than this of developing a co-operative Christian conscience? And let it not be thought that this problem concerns the employer more than it does the employee, the man who sells his brains for big dividends more than the man who sells his body for a "full dinner pail." This is peculiarly the problem of our time. The effective working of the gospel in almost any of us to-day is conditioned to a degree the world has never known before upon the development of a social conscience that shall be purely and profoundly Christian.

These are the larger lines of the problem of interpreting the gospel in the terms of our times. In one sense all these problems are old; they were always part of the main problem. Yet are they each of them as different from what they were yesterday as Europe is different from the Europe of Thomas à Kempis' day. And all our problems, however old in substance, are so new in emphasis that they are

practically new worlds to conquer for the Christ. If his gospel is to win them through us, we must be very sure that we know what his gospel is.



Quiz

1. Who was Thomas à Kempis?
2. In what respect does the monastic attitude toward life differ from the method of Jesus' ministry?
3. What is the fundamental problem of every generation with reference to Christian living?
4. How does the enlarging field of knowledge and research affect Christian living to-day?
5. What are the forces which make most for mammonism now?
6. How is the problem of pleasure affected by modern developments?
7. What do you understand by a social conscience?

Topics for Further Study

1. What are the dangers of pietism?
2. Is the cheerfulness of present-day Christian living as compared with the somberness of the past wholly an advantage?
3. If you perceive points of danger and disadvantage in the present attitude, indicate what they are.
4. Do you consider the present age as on the whole more favorable to Christian living than the past?
5. If so, state what its advantages are.

CHAPTER II

THE GOSPEL THAT WORKS

IN a quiet Christian home, not long ago, I found this bit of verse from a well-known woman writer of to-day:

“ So many gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind,
When just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs.”

The “sad world” was no idle phrase with that family just then, for under the modestly framed motto was an open coffin, and in the coffin lay the youngest daughter of the house, one of the fairest girls of thirteen brief summers I have ever seen. There was certainly need of the gospel of kindness in that house that day. And there was need of more.

There is need of the gospel of kindness in every home and every age. The “art of being kind” is not so common that we can afford to despise any wise emphasis upon it. Nor is it so small a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ as some suppose. Love may be the larger word, but there is some-

thing of the warmth and glow of the open fireside about that word kindness, and it does one's heart good to sit before it and take in the brightness and comfort of it.

But the word kindness will have to be exceedingly enlarged beyond all its ordinary meanings if we are going to make it cover all the height and depth and length and breadth of religion. This is putting a strain upon the word which our differences concerning "gods" and "creeds" will hardly justify. Nor would these differences disappear if we called our "gods" and "creeds" by some other name, whether that name were kindness or some more pretentious word.

Our age will not be satisfied with sectarianism for religion, but neither will it be satisfied with sentiment. There is nothing in "gods" and "creeds" except as our idea of "being's source and end" is an inspiration to godly, that is godlike, living. In the last analysis the value of a man's "god" is the "good" which follows. So also the value of a man's creed, that is of his belief, is its product in character. What he lives is his actual faith. But it is foolish to suppose that kindness cannot be counterfeited quite as easily as any other god or creed when kindness is substituted for these, and there is no reason whatever for the notion that men would all think alike as to kindness if that were suddenly made the universal religious formula. There would be as many kinds of kindness in that

case as there are kinds of "gods" and "creeds" now.

The popular disparagement of "gods" and "creeds" which finds expression everywhere today is chiefly due to the fact that our contentions about these things so often obscure the real thing, and that is that the end of all religion is moral and not metaphysical, spiritual and not intellectual, a present salvation from "the sin that doth so easily beset us" and not a hypothetical "beatification" in some "blessed land" beyond the grave. It is better to be kind here and now, if the kindness is real and not merely superficial, than it is to hide harshness and selfishness under the borrowed plumage of empty talk about God, even though our kindness lack something of conscious inspiration through faith in him who is nevertheless the source of all the goodness and kindness that is in the world. It is better to be negative as to one's beliefs, to confess a kind of a vague agnosticism as to the beginning and end of things if one can still be positive on the side of righteousness and truthfulness and kindness between man and man than to have "the plan of the ages" at one's tongue's end, and at the same time be narrow and intolerant and void of any effective social consciousness. "God is not mocked," and as between the man who worships a shibboleth in the name of God and the man who serves righteousness and misses the definition of the divine, there is no reason to think that he will

prefer the label on an empty package to the goods themselves, though the label has been obscured. The "foundation of God" which "nevertheless standeth sure" is very significantly defined in the ancient Scripture in two great affirmations, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and "let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." Only as our dogmatic and creedal packages are the guarantee of genuineness and uncontamination will they count for anything with God.

All this is granted with the heartiest welcome to any thoughtful and earnest protest against mere creedalism as a substitute for helpful, faithful, kindly living. By all means let us beware of "gods" and "creeds" which tend to get between us and godly character. The demand for life as against mere lip service is good. The insistence upon kindness as much nearer the heart of religion than contention over definitions is sensible and sound. "Sound doctrine" means first of all sound living, and when it means less the clamor for it is a false cry. The world's need to-day, the panacea for present problems, is not the success of this or that dogma in itself considered, nor the triumph of any mere definition of the gospel; the world's need is the gospel itself, and nothing less than this will work salvation for the men and women of our time. And whatever else the gospel may include or imply, the gospel itself is first and last and always ■

life, of which kindness is no inconsiderable part. Jesus came "that men might have life," not logic, and that "they might have it more abundantly," not that they might increase their creeds, of which the world had already a plenty even then. Certainly he did not die to save a definition; he died as he lived, to save men. Neither is there any definition by which men are always and everywhere saved. Men are saved as they live in him, and in no other way. The value of a man's creed is simply as a viaduct through which the water of life finds its way to his inmost life. It is the water that saves, not the waterway. Yet, how shall a man drink without a "cup," even the "blood"; that is, the life of Christ? Why find fault that some waterways are of wood, and some of clay, and some of lead or iron or stone, unless they are so clogged that the water cannot flow through them at all, or unless they dangerously contaminate the water itself? Grant that the water is the all in all, and that here and there men are found strong enough to go back to its hidden sources in the hills and drink from their own hands. Still is it not true that for the vast majority of those who "labor and are heavy laden" the water must be carried to their lips in cups and vessels which other men have made and filled, and by waterways which are not always perfect in service? Even the poorest of this service is generally better than no service at all. And, unfortunately, if I may carry the figure a little farther, the tend-

ency in modern life is to favor less of private monopoly in these waterways which serve the multitude, and to make the service both cheaper and better; in a word, to give every man more of immediate control over his own supplies.

The fact is that what we need is not fewer "gods" and "creeds." What we need is more. We need that every man shall have his own thought about God, and that every man shall have his own individual faith toward the divine. There would be more of goodness and kindness if there were more thoughtfulness about religious things. The gospel will work best as it works most individually, as every man insists upon it for himself that he has a pure and a plenteous supply. We may not all prefer the same kind of a cup, and we may not all be supplied through the same particular pipe next to our own door. But we are all getting to the point where we feel the common need of getting the water as nearly as possible as it falls out of the same generous skies or springs in purity from the depths of the ground. And for our religion we are all getting back more and more to the mountain heights of the Scriptures and the skies under which we stand face to face with God.

Let the young Christian beware both of overmuch dependence upon creeds and of overmuch disparagement of creeds. He can neither get along with them nor without them of themselves. Their value for him is their mediation of life to him. If the

divine life flows free and strong through them, they are of value to him, otherwise they are worse than vain. But let him not suppose that he can substitute for them some vague sentiment which has no sense of God and no imperative of divine origin and destiny within it. This will prove but a mirage in the desert. No gospel will work very long or very far in our own age or any other which is not first of all a gospel of God. "Well, what do *you* believe in?" I asked an irate infidel, who gloried in the name, and who was raging against the idea of God. And he thundered at me with tremendous inconsistency, "What do I believe in? I believe in LOVE!" Yet, long centuries ago, one said to have been that disciple who leaned on Jesus' bosom, and who learned from the Master himself the immortal and incomparable definition, gave this as the synonym of God, "God is LOVE." So that either the infidel was himself a hypocrite, or else he was not an infidel, since his faith was in God. A man may look up, and in fellowship with Jesus say, "Abba," that is, "Father," or he may talk learnedly of his confidence in "the integrity of the cosmic process," but if he thinks truly at all, he will hardly get away from the idea of God. No other gospel works life in men. It is no accident that the record is made concerning Moses, whose kindness to Israel was no mere personal sentiment, but an all-consuming social passion, "He endured as seeing him who is invisible." No kindness bigger than

a bit of simple good nature or passing sentiment will long "endure" without spiritual vision. The gospel that works is the gospel of God.

And it is the gospel of God in a person, in "the man Christ Jesus." "You think that you do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ," I said in substance to a friend of ultra-Unitarian views, but of very beautiful and Christlike life. "Are you sure of it? Is not the God and Father in whom you believe really Jesus Christ, whom you have given another name? Are not all your thoughts of the divine actually in terms of Jesus Christ? Neither you nor any one else can be saved from false thinking and false living, except as you do really think and live in him, whether you recognize him as the source of your living and thinking or not." He could not deny the affirmation, though he was slow to allow what it implied to me.

The gospel that works is always and everywhere the gospel of Jesus Christ. It always was. Even before Jesus was revealed? Certainly so. This is the meaning of that word, "Before Abraham was I am"; and that other word said to those who felt themselves at a disadvantage because the generation of those who had seen and known the Lord in the flesh was rapidly failing from among men, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The only gospel that ever saved anybody was the gospel of Jesus Christ. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh

into the world." Something of the light which shone in all perfectness in him has filtered through to all men, and they have been saved from present sinning and for the future mercy of God just in the measure that they have believed and lived the doctrine which he made incarnate, the word which he "made flesh." There is truth in the old doctrine of "total depravity" to this extent at least that every man is wholly bad except as he catches here and there something of the spirit of Jesus and is touched with something of his life. Men are only saved even here and now as they are saved in him, by getting for the moment or for this or that phase of character into oneness with him.

It is true enough that religion is not fundamentally and finally a matter of "gods" and "creeds." Neither is it a matter of "the art of being kind" alone. It is a matter of getting into touch with God through essential union with Jesus Christ in the life which he lived among men. A man's definition of God may be faulty and his creed at many points quite incredible to any intelligent mind, and yet he may have much of the spirit of Christ, and the gospel of Christ may be working in him mightily for the salvation of the world. But whatever of good there is in him, and whatever of good he is actually doing in the world, is of Christ; not of his beliefs about Christ, which may be very much awry, but of his substantial agreement with Christ in spirit and in word and deed. There is a vast

amount of believing about Jesus, and some of it quite correct believing, which does not work. Whatever does work and stand the test of time, needs only to be truly known to be proven as belonging to the revelation of Christ. Nothing will work that is not fundamentally of him. Nothing that is actually of him will ultimately fail to work. What the age needs is Christ. Not the name only, nor this or that creed about him. None of our creeds about him have any importance worth while except as they mediate his life to us and to the world. When we make them final we make them mischievous, sometimes more mischievous than no creed at all. Creeds only work good as they work Christ into human lives. He who has Christ will need no other master to teach him kindness. But Christ will teach him vastly more. He will teach him love in all its largeness, and with this love, faith toward God and toward man, without which love is as sad as Buddhism; and with this faith, hope, both for the future of this present world and for his own and humanity's hereafter. Nothing that the world needs is out of Christ, and nothing of good that the world has. If there is any superior efficiency in the gospel of our day, and I think there is, it is the superior efficiency of a gospel which is more perfectly than the faith of yesterday the gospel which Jesus lived and taught. If there is any deficiency, and there is much beyond question, it is deficiency in understanding or applying the truth

as it is in him. Whether for yourself or for the world, if you would find the gospel that works you must find him.



Quiz

1. In what sense can we properly speak of "gods" to-day?
2. What is the end and object of religion as here set forth?
3. What value have creeds?
4. What is believing in God?
5. What do you understand by thinking of God "in terms of Jesus Christ"?
6. Can a man believe in Christ and not believe properly about him?
7. What is the gospel that works?

Topics for Further Study

1. What is kindness?
2. What are the indications in modern life that men are moving toward democracy in religion and away from monopoly?
3. What varieties of practical polytheism have we still with us to-day?
4. In what sense could men be actually saved through Christ before Christ came?
5. In what sense is Christ the working gospel of all ages?
6. What do you understand by finding Christ for yourself?

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT, A CHRISTIAN'S FIRST DUTY

IT is said of the great Russian thinker and writer, Count Lyoff Tolstoy, now past eighty years of age, that he recently confessed a consciousness of three periods in his life. During the first period, which is far away from him now in point of time and much farther in any interest or regard he has toward it, he lived for himself and for the pleasures of the flesh. The second period, which was the period of his conversion and his first religious writings, and also largely of his philanthropic efforts, he was chiefly anxious to do good, and to disseminate his ideas for the benefit of mankind. During the third period even his anxiety to do good has largely ceased, and his interest is in being good; or as he would put it, he is content to seek for himself fellowship with God and that perfection of character which he realizes now as the highest end and aim of life.

Thomas Carlyle, the great Scotch philosopher, who in his own way was perhaps as profoundly religious as Tolstoy himself, made a somewhat similar confession in his old age. Speaking of Darwin and Darwinism, he once said: "The older I grow, and

now I stand upon the brink of eternity, the more there comes back to me the words which I learned from the old church catechism when a child: 'What is the chief aim and end of man?' and the answer: 'To glorify God, and enjoy him forever.' No gospel of dirt, teaching that men are descended from frogs through monkeys, can ever set that aside."

Carlyle's fling at evolution, which was a considerably different matter then from what it is now, we can afford to pass by, for it does not concern us here. But the testimony of these two mighty minds to the primary importance of spiritual growth and culture as the end of supreme significance in itself is testimony not to be lightly ignored. Whatever allowance we may make for the lessening interest of men in what are called practical affairs as earth recedes and the other world draws nearer, these men cannot be accused of ever having lost their sense of fellowship with humanity or their intense and self-sacrificing spirit toward the betterment of this present world. It might be said of them in a sense, as it was said of Jesus, "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." Carlyle, and Tolstoy at eighty belong to the world, and have no less hearty interest in it than fifty years before. But they understand better what life's first great concern really is.

The best gift that any man can give to the world is himself. And a man never gives himself to the

world until he has first of all given himself to God. This is no formal religious phrase; it is supreme spiritual fact. That old story in Genesis is capable of many a concealed meaning. It is not good for man "to be" alone. Doing is as necessary to being as the woman is to the man. "And what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." But being is first. And not until being is formed at the hand of God, and gets its life from the very breath of God, can doing proceed by the same divine will out of its side. And then they two are indeed one flesh.

Christian living to-day cannot be separated from the life of to-day. If we are to follow Jesus' method of mingling with men, and interpenetrating the human with the divine, we must be men and women of our time, in touch with its expanding knowledge, participating in its enlarging material development, responsive to its humor and happiness, and co-operating in its co-operative spirit. We must be able to distinguish the gospel from the incidents and accidents of present-day religious expression in gospel lands, and must know how to apply the substance of hope and faith and love so that the very essence of the Christian revelation shall be applied to the everyday aspects of life as it actually is in the world around us to-day. But to understand our times is even less important than to understand ourselves, and the good we give will be limited always and everywhere by the good we get.

Moral philosophers have discussed a great deal the question, What is the *summum bonum*, "the greatest good"? Much may be said for happiness as the end toward which all things move. But perfection of character, which includes happiness as a consequent, is on the whole the more satisfactory definition of life's aim and end. "Be ye therefore perfect," said Jesus, "even as your Father in heaven is perfect." He did not say, "Be ye therefore happy," though he indicated in his beatitudes that blessedness, or happiness, is the resultant of right character. The words that we run off so often in glib fashion, "Be good and you'll be happy," have a large measure of substantial sense in them. Yet the more modern version of the saying, half facetiously said, "Be good and you'll be lonesome," voices a great deal of very serious experience. One of our common Christian hymns has for its chorus in part, "And now I am happy all the day." But the words are not true of most of us, and they are not true of the best of us in the light fashion in which we run them off our tongues. Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," notwithstanding the "joy" and "peace" which were his priceless bequest to the world. And every man who follows him will know something of "the fellowship of his suffering" before he tastes of "the power of his resurrection." Not mirth, but manhood; not pleasure, but personality; not happiness, but wholeness the Christian must

make the greatest good of his effort and his thought.

There is danger in any lower ideal. Happiness so easily becomes mere luxuriousness, or some form of mischievous self-indulgence. Hedonism, the philosophy of pleasure, may, indeed, become highly moral if carefully reasoned out and held under the dominion of serious thought; but the whole tendency of it is to degenerate easily into this or that form of sensuous delight. Even a great deal of what passes for Christian happiness is very far removed from that blessedness which Jesus set forth as the fruit of the humble, gentle, pure, and peaceable mind. Much of it is the contagious enthusiasm of an emotional crowd, wherein half the charm and a large part of the danger of our great meetings will be found. Much of it is the half-unconscious gratification of personal ambitions, and the deep desire for prominence which more or less actuates us all. Sometimes it is a kind of self-induced hypnotic state wherein we abide in dangerous self-complacency because we have lost the sense of our relations to the actual life around us for a time. A great deal of so-called "holiness" is of this last-named type, and does not really consist in wholesomeness of character so much as it does in a defective consciousness of self and the living world about us. There are as many forms of deceitful happiness as there are kinds of intoxicating drink, and there is more pertinence than appears to many

of us in the old-fashioned warning of the Scriptures, "And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." All forms of happiness tend to excess, even what is sometimes called spiritual happiness. The spirit of wholeness, of perfectness, is our only safe guide.

There is need of caution, even with reference to perfection as an ideal, lest we think of self-development too much from the standpoint of self alone, and with regard to an ideal which is not the ideal of the gospel. All that has been said about the modern Christian's problems, and all that has been said concerning the substance of the gospel that works, needs to be kept in mind if we are to seek such development as will make us both Christian and Christian in relation to the age in which we live.

A witty young minister, who was attending a banquet of Christian workers, and had his newly wedded bride with him, got off this clever witticism at her expense: "Some women," he said, "marry shoemakers that they may be shod for nothing; some women marry doctors that they may be doctored for nothing." Then, looking fondly and roguishly at his wife, he added slowly, "And some women marry ministers—that they may be good for nothing."

Neither women nor men are good unless they are good for something. A great deal of perfectionism is altogether in the air; it amounts to nothing in

practical Christian living. It is not really self-development so much as it is self-excitation and self-illusionment. The man does not actually know any more than he knew before. Most perfectionists are wholly out of sympathy and understanding of modern knowledge. The man is not a better workman, nor a better master. The Eighth Psalm is a wonderful picture of man as the viceroy of God upon earth, entering into his lordship over nature as he enters more and more into his sonship with God. But a great deal of what is mistaken for Christian culture is wholly apart from man's sovereignty over the world around him; it has nothing to do with the world's work. Especially is a great deal of what is reckoned effort toward Christian perfection morbid and melancholy and wholly out of touch with wholesome laughter and life's good cheer. This is not perfection, for there can be no perfection of any part which does not adapt it for its place in the whole. No piece of a watch is perfect unless it will work with the rest. Perfection means participation, not abstraction. To develop one feature of a man's face out of all harmonious relation to his other features is to make a caricature of the man. And a good deal of "religiousness" is a caricature of righteousness, not the less so that it is sincere and serious enough.

Herein is the mischief of mysticism of every type. It lacks where Jesus was complete—in his identification of himself with life. "Jesus grew in wisdom

and in stature, and in favor with God and man." But he grew within his environment, and he grew into all the life of his time. He did not grow apart from men, but he grew among men. Doubtless he studied in such schools as Nazareth had. There is an easily believable tradition that he worked at the carpenter's bench with his father. He wore no such exceptional clothes as John the Baptist wore, nor did he live upon a peculiar diet, or assume in anywise peculiar ways. This is Christian development, in harmonious adjustment with actual everyday life. It is not being good, either "for nothing," or in some far-off abstract, emotional way. It is emphatically "being good for something." Yet it is more than mere activity. Jesus was no institutionalist. He was as far from identifying character with outward circumstance and conditions as he was from divorcing the two. Development with him was never separate from life, but neither was it identical with any outward show. He was both the practical man of affairs and the idealist, both of his own century emphatically, and of eternity. His perfection was both timely and timeless.

One gets this development only by holding fast to these two things: the "time-spirit" of his own age, and the timelessness of the essential gospel. To know the age in which we live, to feel its problems and enter sympathetically into their solution, to have what may be called a contemporary consciousness; and then to know the heart of the gospel, to

get beneath its own time-forms to its everlasting and never-changing spirit, and to bring these two together in one's self so that the seed of the timeless truth shall grow in the newly turned soil of the present and shall have every advantage of the latest instruments and methods of cultivation, this is what Christian development means when rightly understood.

"After that he had served his own generation according to the will of God he fell on sleep," is the great epitaph of Israel's great shepherd-king. And that is still the Christian ideal, to live "according to the will of God" and in that will to serve one's "own generation." Only the gospel of Christ has given us a clearer manifestation of God, and of what it is to live "according to his will." And it has given us also a "generation" of our own whose conditions are very different from those which confronted the son of Jesse and the successor of Saul. But David was more Christian than many Christians are, because he combined communion with the divine and the companionship of men in all that made for the larger life of his times in a measure altogether too uncommon in the world yet.

This is the Christian's first business, perfection. Not abstraction from the wickedness of the world, nor activity in the religiousness of the world, but the development of himself in faith, and hope, and love. In this development he will find retirement sometimes necessary to enlargement of life. In this

development he will find religious activity often helpful to him. But he will choose them not as ends in themselves, but as means to the one great end, the realization of the divine life in himself. And he will study to perfect himself not in some peculiar type of ecstatic experience, but in the service of men through being himself among men, and in relation to like experiences with their own the embodiment of the truth which alone can make men free.

To honor God, to benefit mankind,
To serve with lowly gifts the lowly needs
Of the poor race for which the God-
man died,
And do it all for love! Oh, this is great,
And he who does this will achieve a name
Not only great, but good.

—J. G. Holland.



Quiz

1. What is the chief aim and end of man as suggested by Tolstoy and Carlyle, and other like philosophers?
2. What do you understand by perfection, and what is the chief defect of most so-called "perfectionism"?
3. What is "Hedonism"?
4. Can a Christian reasonably expect to be always happy?
5. If not, why not?
6. What is the mischief of mysticism?
7. What do you understand by the "time-

spirit" and the "timelessness of the essential gospel" as applied to practical Christian living?

Topics for Further Study

1. Are the present aspects of the doctrine of evolution more or less favorable to the religious life than the earlier definitions of it?
2. Do you discover any likeness between the monastic attitude toward the Christian life and modern "holiness"?
3. What may be said for the great mystics and for mysticism in general?
4. Is religious activity ever a menace to the religious life?

CHAPTER IV

THE GOSPEL AND WORSHIP

ON the face of the returns, the enlargement of modern life has not made for worship. There is an old and often quoted sentiment, given on the authority of more than one great name, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion." However this may be, the remarkable increase of knowledge in our times, and the apparent decline of public worship, seem sometimes to justify the proverb. There are a great many people who unfortunately have been educated away from the churches, and many of the keenest minds of the day confess both in speech and conduct their indifference to all the forms of religious devotion.

The growth of wealth has also made against worship. Mammonism has never been on the side of spiritual sensibility, and spiritual sensibility is at the root of worship. Here and there a millionaire may be sincerely religious, and a great many people of moderate fortune, especially if that fortune is inherited, are undoubtedly so. But the multitude of those who are possessed with the money mania are not genuinely interested in prayer and praise and the quest after the values that are unseen. All

who give themselves passionately to the pursuit of wealth are thereby drawn away from following after Christ, according to the discipleship which he himself required when he walked among men. The increasing clamor of the market-place does not make for growth in the spirit of meditation, and the larger material prizes which our age offers to the man who succeeds after the world's methods and the world's measures do not serve as an inducement to worship God alone.

The intenser pleasure life of our period is also unfavorable to worship. The bicycle, the automobile, the Sunday excursion, the Sunday theater and nickelodeon, and all the multiplied devices for attracting the people away from Sunday rest and the house of God on the one day in seven when they are otherwise unemployed, have tremendously increased the temptation to forget God and live in the sensations of the present hour. This pleasure life of the many in its more unhealthful phases is stimulated by the money mania of those who cater to them. The street railway manager may himself be the devout and orthodox Sunday-school teacher in an evangelical Sunday-school, yet the railway of which he has charge may be one of the most mischievous promoters of Sabbath desecration and all-around Sunday dissipation which the city or State can show. The big breweries have not more unconscionably contributed to the extension of the retail liquor shop and the stimulation by every evil

device of the demoralizing appetite for strong drink to the end that they might increase their own dividends at whatever cost to the public welfare than have the venders of transportation and the promoters of amusements forced forth their dividends with unrighteous disregard for those great interests of society which are bound up in a right use of the weekly rest day, and in the preservation of the spirit of worship.

The forces that work against worship as to the observance of its outward forms, at least, are not wholly evil in themselves. Quite aside from that type of knowledge which leads men away from the church and the religious life, and far removed from the materialistic mammonism and thoughtless pleasure-seeking which work the same result in even more destructive ways, there are other forces at work which are good in themselves, and in the main, wholesome in their influence which are, nevertheless, not on the side of crowded churches, the swelling anthem, and the voice of public prayer.

The increase of real religion sometimes makes for an apparent decline of worship. Men who think of churchgoing as the sum and substance of religious obligation, are frequently more attentive to it than are those who appreciate more truly what religion is. The comparison often lightly made between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the matter of faithful and self-sacrificing attendance upon public worship, is generally faulty at this point.

The average Roman Catholic thinks of religion much more in terms of ritual and formal devotion than does the average Protestant. Worship with the one is the first fact in religion; with the other the first fact is spiritual attitude. The church *is* religion to the one; it is only an expression of religion to the other. Therefore, as men grow in appreciation of what the gospel is in fact, they are, superficially, at least, more indifferent to this or that particular form. The woman with whom Jesus talked at the well of Samaria was apparently more concerned than was Jesus himself in regard to the proprieties of public worship. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," is her plaint. Jesus sets all the externals of religion aside for the moment that he may emphasize the spiritual character of any real approach to God. If the church is conceived of as some divinely appointed place of worship, and worship itself as a certain set manner of approach to God, then did Jesus make less of worship than the Samaritan woman. But he made a great deal more of the inner life of worship than she had ever known.

The gospel that works does not always work most for a life of devotional form. Perfection of character as an ideal tends to emphasize the doing of what Jesus said, and identity of spirit with his spirit, rather than any ritualistic recitation of "Lord! Lord!" There is a great deal of cant

and insincerity on the part of many who excuse their neglect of the church and public worship for a pretended fellowship with God in nature, though with some, "the groves are God's first temples" still.

Likewise, many gloss over their mammonism with dishonest deceit as to the pressure of business life upon them, and their need of rest on the Lord's Day, and many others justify a false "recreation" with a mere subterfuge of words. But when all this is said, it is still true that the better side of modern religious life, the growing appreciation of the simplicity of the gospel, and the increasing demand for a Christian life as against mere lip service, play an important part to-day in determining the definition of worship which everywhere more and more prevails. And this new definition of worship, which is more Christian at heart, is part of the reason why our age seems less worshipful than the ages which have gone before.

Jesus made few references to public worship, and when he did refer to worship, his references were not always of a complimentary kind. He spoke depreciatingly of the long prayers of the Pharisees, and all the ostentation of their pretended service of God. He warned men against sacrifice itself when the worshiper was not at peace with his fellows, and put reconciliation with man before the offering of any kind of homage to God. Even the devotion of almsgiving was offensive to him if it lacked the spirit of self-effacing love. He laid no requirement

upon his disciples of regular attendance upon public worship, nor did he prescribe any forms or seasons for their approach to the Father. The one prayer that he gave was prefaced with a distinct and emphatic approval of private rather than public prayer.

Moreover, ages of religious decadence have always made relatively more of religious worship and less of the actually religious life. Revivals may increase church attendance, and may open the mouths of many in public testimony and prayer who were silent before, and may re-establish many a family altar; but the deeper and more abiding they are, the more they draw men away from mere dependence upon churches and forms, and the more they emphasize spirit and life. Whenever the churchgoing and the testimony and the singing and praying become an end in themselves, the cause of religion is more injured than helped. Formal worship is worse than useless when it becomes a substitute for the life which is "hid with Christ in God," that is, for spiritual fellowship with the divine. To appreciate the worth of worship, one must first of all recognize its subordinate place. To withstand those influences in our time which make against worship "in spirit and in truth," the Christian of to-day must see clearly how much more there is in worship than time and place and form, and must be ready to admit that here especially "The letter killeth," and only the spirit "giveth life."

Our word worship means originally and essentially not form, but moral attitude. Worship is a modification of "worth-ship." Wherever there is a sense of worthiness there is worship. The greater the sense of worthiness the more profound is the worship. The worship that is not based upon a deep sense of worthiness is really no worship at all. It may be nothing more than a kind of religious sensuousness. Such is often the effect of "a dim, religious light," of the music which "hath charms to soothe the savage breast," yet leaves him no less a savage than before, of soporific incense and intonation, of all the circumstance of showy ceremonial and pretentious rite. This is primarily an appeal to the senses, and not to the spirit. There may be life in it, but it is life girt about and all but smothered with unnecessary clothes. Such worship has all the danger and disadvantage of the fashionable woman's extreme devotion to dress—it dwarfs and shrivels the soul. On the whole, we are dressing more simply and more sensibly than our forebears did. And we are also learning more of the simplicity of that worship which the gospel of Christ inspires.

When a man lifts his hat to a woman, he recognizes the worth of womanhood, otherwise the courtesy is an empty form. The act is good in itself, but it is chiefly good as indicating what ought to be the habitual attitude of mind and heart on the part of every man toward every woman. He who does not reverence woman in his life, does not truly

show her deference at all. Likewise, when a man salutes the flag, he does it first of all in his heart, and justifies it with his life, or else his pretended patriotism is like unto that which Samuel Johnson declared "the last refuge of a scoundrel." The lifting of the hat to a woman and the salutation of the flag are not forms to be despised, but they are forms which need very much to be guarded against insincerity and the perfunctory mood. Those who sweep the hat lowest are often quickest to follow the exaggerated courtesy with some cynical remark about women. And those who make much of flag worship are not infrequently the hirelings and tools of all those forces which make most against the national welfare. Spread-eagleism and real patriotism are usually a long way apart.

The life of Jesus was one long act of worship, in that his every word and deed was saturated with the sense of spiritual values. He taught his disciples to "pray without ceasing," at the same time that he warned them against long prayers. There is no contradiction here, but the profoundest harmony. He who does not pray always does not really pray at all. The prayers that God hears are the prayers that a man lives. "Your life speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say," is especially pertinent with respect to prayer. Prayer is essentially moral attitude. Singing is nothing but sound unless it is "making melody in your heart to the Lord." Kneeling has only the dubious value of an

easy-going physical exercise, unless the habitude of a man's life is that of reverence for the infinite and the eternal. Even the bread and wine of the communion are less than ordinary bread and butter if one has not learned to commune with the Father in all his eating and drinking, and to make a divine fellowship of all his intercourse with his fellows. Unless the sense of God is natural and habitual to the man, no exceptional attitude of body and no formal phrase from his lips can make him a worshiper of God. God has less use for form considered apart from the life than we have for the corn husk after the grain is removed. Like the husk, the form is only good when it protects the life and aids its growth.

There may be less of formal worship to-day than there was of old. This may, in part, be due to influences which are not good. It is true, however, that formal worship is not without worth; nay, it is of much worth. To strip the husk wholly away from the corn, especially when the corn is yet undeveloped, is to invite disaster and death. So far, therefore, as conceit of knowledge leads men away from that "beginning of wisdom" which is "the fear of the Lord," or absorption in money-getting and pleasure-seeking tend to turn men away from the more abiding satisfaction and delight of waiting upon God, we ought not to be indifferent to the evil tendencies of the times. But the times are not wholly evil in this respect. The churches are not

deserted. Prayer has not ceased. Christian song was never so frequent and so hearty as it is now. There is much more of actual communion with God than any man can measure. And apart from all the forms of worship, the attitude of life which is the heart of worship, grows more commanding every day. The gospel of Christ is far from ceremonialism. But it is through and through a life of worship. It is "rejoicing in the Lord always." It is perpetual prayer. It is getting and keeping "in tune with the infinite." It is ceaseless adoration of the might and love and wisdom which men feel more and more is in all and through all and over all. To worship in the terms of the gospel of Christ is to "live and move and have one's being" every day in God. There was never so much of this life of worship in the world as there is to-day. And if the life of worship increases, there is no need to fear that any needful or helpful form of worship will cease to be. And those who have this spirit must see to it that helpful form of worship shall not cease to be.

**Quiz**

1. What are the influences which make most against religious worship in our day?
2. How can real religion operate to decrease worship?
3. What was the attitude of Jesus toward public worship?
4. What is the meaning of the word, "worship," and what is it in spirit and in truth?
5. What

does it mean to "pray without ceasing," and how is this consistent with the teaching of Jesus against long prayers?

Topics for Further Study

1. The influence of modern street railways, the automobile, the bicycle, and other forms of transportation upon church attendance.
2. The comparative rest value of Sunday "recreations" and church attendance.
3. Is the appeal of music and art primarily sensuous or spiritual?
4. What is the moral value of formal worship?
5. How can the one who is spiritual best aid formal worship?

CHAPTER V

THE GOSPEL AND HOME CONDUCT

THERE went the round of the papers, some years ago, a story, which was supposed to be humorous, but which was really very far from amusing to any thoughtful Christian man. According to the story, a certain man came home and found, to his indignation, that a tramp had called in his absence, and had been very harsh and insulting to his wife. The man was very much incensed, and at length, turning angrily upon his son, a youth of twelve or fourteen years of age, asked sharply, "Where were you, Harry, when this occurred?" "I was in the woodshed," answered the boy with some confusion. "Couldn't you hear the man talking to your mother?" demanded the father, more severely now. "Yes," replied the lad shamefacedly. "Then why didn't you interfere?" thundered the irate father, ready to vent his vexation upon the child. But the boy made answer, still hanging his head, and without any impertinence in his manner, "Because, father, I—I—I thought it was you."

It is hardly too much to allow that this might have happened in many a professedly Christian home. There are Christian men, at least men of

Christian profession not a few, who habitually talk to their wives and children in a manner which they would not for a moment tolerate from an outsider. They snarl and scold and browbeat in a way in which no gentleman would address a stranger of either sex. And in this respect it is only fair to say women are sometimes almost, if not quite, as bad. They nag and whine and fret and fume in the home, and are all smiles and graciousness on the outside. So also, in many a Christian home, brothers and sisters indulge in language toward each other which they would not stand from anybody else. Many a Christian boy, if overheard by his girl friends talking to his sister or mother after the manner in which he frequently "talks back" at them, would hardly lift his face before his friends again. And the sisters are not by any means faultless with respect to their manners toward their intimates in the home.

This bad behavior in the home does not mean that genuine affection is lacking between those who thus abuse each other. Often people who strive with each other irascibly all day long will resent bitterly any slightest reflection by an outsider upon the object of their ordinary irritation. Even the mother who hardly ever gives her child a pleasant look or a pleasant word will slave for the lad far into the night, and will weep over his coffin in an utterly heartbroken way when the aggravating feet and hands are forever stilled. Perhaps the

saddest thing about our frequent bad behavior toward each other in the home is the fact that we cover up with roughness and harshness the tenderness we would give the world to express. But we are afraid of sentiment, and ashamed of our own awkwardness when we try to be gentle to each other, and it is wofully easy to vent our irritation and weariness and depression of spirits upon others, especially upon those who know us and love us, so that we can presume upon their love as we dare not presume upon the courtesy of a stranger. We know, and we feel sure that they know, the sincerity of our affection for them, in spite of the discourteous and often disgraceful manner in which we talk and act toward them. Our very sincerity is more than half the reason for our severity.

Nor does all this rudeness mean that the Christian profession of those who are guilty of this harsh and unhappy home conduct is nothing but pious pretense. They are often quite as sincere in their love for God and for the things of the kingdom of God as they are genuine in their affection toward the loved ones whom they abuse. There is a wide distance between insincerity and inconsistency. It is neither wise nor just to impeach altogether a man's Christian character because he sometimes acts like a boor in the home. But when he is acting the boor, he is certainly not acting the Christian part. If the gospel is an actual saving power here and now, it ought to give us the victory in the home.

And the gospel will, when it is faithfully applied in every aspect of everyday life. When every allowance is made for the sincerity of our affection for our kindred and household, despite our unloving manners toward them, and for the genuineness of our religious profession despite the frequent violation of Christian courtesy and decency in the privacy of the family circle, it is still true that failure in Christian living at home is both dangerous to the home and disastrous to the whole development of character. No man rises very much higher than his home life.

There is a kind of cowardice about this rudeness at home which ought to go far to shame us out of it when it is rightly understood. We take liberties with our loved ones which we simply do not dare to take with strangers. They would not stand for the tone in which we often speak in the home, let alone the insulting roughness of what we say. If they did not retaliate in kind they would surely "cut us" from that hour. The intimates of the home can hardly do so. They may, indeed, answer back after the same manner, which does but make the matter worse. They cannot very well cut us out of the circle of their acquaintance, and refuse to have anything further to do with us as outsiders may very justly do. Therefore, we ought to be the gentler toward them, because of their very helplessness against us. If we are not so, it is because we are taking a coward's advantage of their situation,

and doing toward them what we lack the courage to do on a level where our rudeness would meet its adequate reward. The more cowardly a man or boy is, the more likely he is to play the boor at home.

Moreover, the manner in which we excuse ourselves for our bad conduct at home is often anything but honest. "Mamma," said a sharp-witted little girl, who had been savagely taken to task by her mother for a show of ill temper, "why do you call it 'cross' when it's me, and 'nervous' when it's you?" Most of us are exceedingly ready with excuses when we ourselves are irritable and disagreeable and sharp tongued and peevishly fault-finding. We are "tired," or "fatigued," or "not feeling very well," or we have "an awful headache"; indeed, we can find a hundred reasons for our mean conduct except the simple truth that we are in bad temper and have not the Christian candor and courage to control ourselves. When we are willing to own the truth, and to lay the chief blame where it belongs, at our own door, we shall be already on the way to victory over the infirmities of our disposition.

This is not to deny that life at home is sometimes truly more trying than it is on the outside. Life's little irritations have their opportunity against us when we are doing the daily drudgery and meeting the very commonplace experiences of the fireside as they have not when we are dressed in our best, and looking our best, and we meet men and

women on the serener levels of social intercourse. It is always easier to keep the flies out of the parlor than it is to keep them out of the kitchen. The buzzing, stinging, irritating little annoyances of life also like the warm, sticky, and stifling atmosphere of hard, prosaic work. Or they are like the dust which fills the city streets, and puts a man's temper on edge, when the same man would walk with smiling memories of his boyhood thronging all the chambers of his soul as he pressed softly the green sward of the country field. The grit that gets into our shoes is more trying to us by far than the big boulders over which we climb with conscious ease. So many a man and woman who will meet a great trial with strong uplift of soul will fail miserably to meet like a Christian the grit of the common day's work. Gulliver, in the land of the Lilliputians, could break any single rope with which they sought to bind him; but when they found him prostrate and tied their thousand threads to every tenderest part of him that was exposed, weaving the web into his hair, he found these threads, and the thousands of tiny darts discharged against him when he tried to break away, too much for him. The Lilliputians are in all our homes, and their little threads and darts are more dangerous to our Christian liberty and to Christian serenity of soul than any Apollyon's sword that can be wielded against us.

The home was the patriarchal church. It is still

the first place in which to build our altars to the Lord. Worship, as already emphasized, is primarily an attitude of the soul. And the primary place to demonstrate that attitude is the home. If a man's life is filled with the sense of God he will not forget God at his own hearthside. "If a man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And if the spirit of Christ is in the man, he will not wholly fail of showing forth that spirit in the most intimate and trying situations of home life. For man or woman the foremost test of the genuineness of faith and love toward Christ is its working worth in the home circle, what it actually accomplishes to raise the level of decency and discipline in the home.

Neither in the home nor anywhere else is the all in all of religion pleasure. There is a difference between friction and irritation, between authority and asperity. We are not likely wholly to eliminate friction for a while, if we ever do. Neither have we wholly passed from under the need of authority. A Christian home life does not mean an easy-going indifference to the infraction of reasonable rules, or the ignoring of mutual rights. "I never knew but one man without a temper," remarked a certain excellent woman who, like Will Carleton's "Betsey," had "a temper of her own," and she added with a wry laugh, "and he was the most aggravating man that I ever knew." There is nothing necessarily unchristian in the possession of

a temper. Indeed, the "possession" of a temper is not that to which moralists generally object, it is rather the "losing" of one's temper; in other words, the not possessing it enough to have control over it. A Christian home is not a home without temper in it, but it is a home where temper is under the control of Christian motive and Christian forbearance. We may go farther and say that a Christian home life is not in terms of reasonable ordinary expectation a faultless régime of exact righteousness. David was a man of many blemishes. He was "a man after God's own heart"; not because he was always right in conduct, but rather because the prevailing disposition of his life was right. He loved, and loved generously, and was not too proud to be penitent nor too self-opinionated to be brokenhearted over his own shortcomings. So also was Peter a man of many infirmities of daily life, a big blunderer in his ways, but as big-hearted in his tears and self-rebukings as he was hasty and impetuous in his speech. We love him, not for his faultlessness, but for his essential and enduring lovingness. A Christian home life will not be always pleasant. It will not be without friction, and certainly not without authority. It will not be without its frequent faults and failures. To expect too much of it is to invite the discouragement which makes for worse defeat. But it will be animated with a Christian purpose, the spirit of mutual service, and the friction and fault of it will

be mitigated and in increasing measure overcome by a willing forgiveness of offenses and a ready recognition of "the law of Christ."

In the largest way this is the test of the working of the gospel in home life. It is very much to be desired that courtesy should prevail in the intimacies of the home circle. Harshness and rudeness are shamefully out of place in a Christian home. The young man or young woman who professes to love Christ, and bears testimony thereto in public meeting, ought to seek with painstaking conscientiousness to testify for Christ in the much more difficult declaration of the daily life, and especially in a decent and orderly walk at home. But let us not lose sight here of what the distinctive thing about the gospel really is. The gospel is not simply a moral code. It is very much more. There may be social and moral propriety without the dominating doctrine of Christ. His gospel is, indeed, a life; but it is much more than an outwardly correct life, more even than a life which is correct in outward appearance when viewed from the close standpoint of the fireside. The life is only Christian when it is through and through a life of love. We must strive for perfection, indeed, and perfection will not be satisfied merely to "mean well" the while we are carelessly doing evil. We must not continue in sin "that grace may abound," continue in unloving conduct and excuse it by claiming that nevertheless we have the loving spirit. If we are faithful to

love within us it will certainly manifest itself in word and deed. Yet it is not propriety nor outward perfectness by which we may know the Christian home first of all. It is the Christian spirit rather, the spirit of humility, the spirit of forgiveness, the spirit of readiness to be reconciled; it is the spirit of the self-effacingness and all-lovingness of the cross. The Fifty-first psalm, the Beatitudes of Jesus, the Master's prayer on the cross, these are all tokens of that mind which ought to distinguish the Christian home.

And nowhere are the rewards of Christian living larger than they are at home. To have the approval of "them that are without" is worth while for any Christian; but how much more does it mean to have the approval of them that are within the range of the most intimate daily life? To lead a stranger to Christ is an unspeakable privilege, but so to live and speak as to lead one's own brother or sister to the Master is to reap a double reward. It is not without meaning that we have this record concerning Andrew, "he first findeth his own brother Simon." If our Christian living does not "find" those who are nearest to us, there is something seriously the matter with it. And if it does, there is unspeakable comfort in the high compliment of such confidence, there is an assurance which the world will not be slow to appreciate that our foundations are sound, and there is a foretaste already in the rich enjoyments of a Christian home life.

of that better life beyond which we cannot conceive as yet, but which we do most significantly suggest when we speak of heaven as our everlasting home.



Quiz

1. How do you explain the frequent boorishness toward each other of members of the same family who are sincerely fond of one another?
2. Can a man be habitually discourteous in the family circle and yet be a Christian?
3. Has a Christian a right to be severe under any circumstances in the exercise of family authority?
4. What is a Christian temper?
5. What are the chief marks of a Christian spirit?

Topics for Further Study

1. Are we growing away from home life?
2. Is family worship every day desirable and practicable in the average modern home?
3. How shall we develop a helpful candor in the home as to matters of religious experience?
4. Is the average of home conduct improving, and if so, is this directly related to the improved status of woman?
5. Would a more equal participation of woman in public life make for more Christian standards at home?

CHAPTER VI

THE GOSPEL WORKING IN THE CHURCH

THERE is a disposition in many quarters to-day to put "churchianity" and Christianity in opposition to each other. One notable instance has been much cited, concerning an audience of working men in New York City, who applauded the name of Christ, and hissed immediately afterward the mention of the church. All over the land there are many who speak respectfully of Jesus who criticize most harshly all the churches which profess to speak in his name. It is comparatively easy to get a whole congregation to rise if the question is one of Christian faith. It is more and more difficult to get those who acquiesce in the reasonableness of religion and the claims of Christ to admit the claims of church-membership and church activity upon them.

Yet, the churches were never so numerous as they are to-day, and probably on the whole, never so effective. There was never so much of the gospel outside of the churches as there is to-day, and there was never so much of the gospel inside of the churches. In spite of all real and apparent opposition to the churches, the gospel is working in and through them as never before, and more than half

the protest against them is an indirect tribute to them, the tribute of men who have learned from the churches how much more the churches ought to be. Those who are most impatient with the churches now, would be many fold more impatient if they were brought face to face with the church life of other centuries. Even the "apostolic churches," which we have exceedingly idealized, would probably prove profoundly disappointing if we immediately confronted them.

How difficult it is to find men and women of intelligence now, and with any appreciation of Christian ideas and ideals who have not, at one time or another, shared the beneficent ministry of the Sunday-school. They may boast that they have not been inside a church "in twenty years," but if you catch them unawares they will boast quite as emphatically that they know all about the churches because, in youth, they were regular frequenters of the Sunday-school or, even "forced to go to church three times a day." This is an admission in fact, if not in form, that so much of the gospel as has found them, came to them through the church, next to the direct ministry of the home. And with many of them the home training was religiously negative, and all that they have learned of Christian precept and principle they have gathered from the Sunday-school or from occasional attendance upon the preaching of the word.

Very few even of those who work in the Sunday-

school to-day apprehend how widespread the influence of the Sunday-school is. It is not only true that the majority of those who join the churches come to church-membership by way of the Sunday-school; but, as already suggested, the Sunday-school reaches in very influential ways a multitude who are lost to church attendance in later years. Undoubtedly it is a misfortune that the churches do not hold them. But just as when our loved ones die we are apt to think of the fact that we have lost them more than we do of the fact that we have had them; so do we sometimes over-emphasize the fact that the church does not hold all who have been under its instruction, and ignore the value of the fact that at least the church had much to do with the shaping of their lives for a little while. Much more than half of the decency and respectability of the world outside of the churches is due to the touch of the gospel upon these men and women in their impressionable years before they turned aside from the Sunday-school. If the Sunday-schools did no more than this, they would be well worth while. In fact, the Sunday-schools do a great deal more. Much of their teaching is very superficial, but there is very little of it which is not, in some degree, beneficial. Moreover, the character of the work is greatly improving from year to year. There are few better ways of learning what the gospel is than to attempt to teach it conscientiously in a modern Sunday-school. Expression makes for impression. Espe-

cially does explanation within the range of the understanding of a child bring one back to the things that are of first importance in the gospel of Christ.

This is another indirect ministry of the Sunday-schools. They are unsurpassed gymnasiums for the exercise of all those who teach and work in them. He is a very poor teacher who does not learn more than his scholars. To get at the very heart of the gospel, one needs to try to tell it over and over, week after week, to a child. It is possible, of course, merely to entertain the child. It is easier yet simply to compel the attention of the child without so much as entertaining him. But the young Christian who goes at it right, and stays with the task faithfully, will sooner or later learn to know some of the deep things of the gospel through interpreting the Scriptures to the understanding of girls and boys. What the Sunday-schools are doing in general moral influence upon those whom the churches do not hold is worth while. What the Sunday-schools are doing for those who operate them and are teachers in them through the reflex influence of their work upon themselves is even more worth while. And, besides this, there is the incalculable worth of the work for those who are thereby led to accept the gospel and give themselves to the service of the kingdom of God. No man who knows what the gospel is, and believes in it, can for a minute despise its working in the Sunday-school to-day.

In the minds of many, the young people's movement has spent its force. If this is true, its force has not been spent in vain. It has added very much to the cheerfulness of present-day religion. Edward Payson and Francis E. Clark were pastors in the same city, of churches of the same denomination. Their ministries fell only a little more than half a century apart. There is no doubt that Edward Payson was a saint, according to the standards of his time. He was certainly esteemed as such by the Christian community in New England a century ago. It is said that on a single morning the birth notices in the Boston papers showed six little Edward Paysons to whom the name of the New England saint had been given. Yet he was a most melancholy and even morbid saint. The contrast between Payson and Clark is much more than personal, otherwise it would not be mentioned here. It is the contrast between the ascetic, John the Baptist piety of the puritanism of yesterday and the saner, sounder, and far more Christian type of religion which prevails to-day. The young people's movement in the churches has done much to deliver us from the unnatural and unhealthful seriousness of the religion of a century ago. The wholesome manliness and happy helpfulness of "Father Endeavor" Clark is typical of the whole movement in which he has played such honorable part. Our young people's movement may be "too light" in many of its manifestations, but it is certainly much

more like the ministry of Jesus than the sickly sentimentalism and exaggerated sanctimoniousness which was mistaken for Christianity awhile ago. Even so good a tract as "The Dairyman's Daughter," marks the melancholy of ordinary religious propaganda until recent times. The very Sunday-schools used to teach the children to sing:

"I want to be an angel,
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
And a harp within my hand."

A sentiment this which never for a minute belonged to any sensible child. If the young people's movement has done its work, it has done its work well in hastening the departure of this hypochondria in religion.

But it remains to be proved that the young people's movement has spent its force. There is very much to show that it has not. The young people's societies are still with us, and a multitude of them are doing very effective work. The work might be both deeper and broader than it is. "Confessing Christ" is good, but it ought to mean something more than a parrotlike repetition of a familiar phrase, and a half-hearted request for the prayers of other people as a kind of easy substitute for earnest and thoughtful effort on one's own behalf. "Rallies" are all right, if they mark real progress; but

a standard that stands still, though it may serve as a May-pole for mere merrymakers to go around and around, will never lead an army to victory. It is rather pitiful to find in a prominent Eastern city, which is filled all summer long with visitors from all over the world, that the Christian young people's societies have adjourned for a period of months, and the only sign of their existence is a momentary revival for the sake of a moonlight excursion upon the bay. Yet, to reason from these things that the gospel is not working, and working to very good effect in and through the young people's societies, is to confess ignorance of much of the most vital Christian literature and the most wholesome and enterprising Christian life of our time.

In this study of the working of the church in modern life, the Sunday-school and the young people's societies are put first, not because they are necessarily first in their demonstration of the gospel, but because they are most immediately related to the young Christian, and through them the young Christian comes into vital, personal activity in the church. The Sunday-school of a church is nearly always what its young people are. It can be made more effective only as they become more effective. In point of intelligence it is seldom beyond the intellectual life of the young people. It is not always up to them in this respect. It is for them to make it so. It is for them to make the Sunday-school also an effective evangelistic and missionary agency. At

no point is there nobler opportunity for enlargement and improvement in Christian service than through intelligent, painstaking devotion upon the part of the young men and young women of the church to the best type of Sunday-school service. Their own society is less important than the Sunday-school. Yet their own society can be made, next to the Sunday-school, the most immediately effective auxiliary of the church. Its prayer meetings can be made promotive of something more than a trite and tasteless testimony through indolent indulgence in formal phraseology. Its socials can be broadened and deepened so as to be beyond all suspicion of caste and clique feeling and frivolous entertainment, and so as to answer to the profoundest longings of the heart of youth for worthy fellowship and real enjoyment of life. Our young people's societies do not begin to make what they ought to make of their literary opportunity. They ought to stimulate right reading on the part of their members. They ought to offer the best in books and pamphlets to all who attend upon their meetings. They ought to utilize the denominational papers for a good clipping bureau, the clippings to be arranged somewhat after the card index style, and kept for ready reference where all the members of the church can get at them. They ought especially to be in touch with the best social service of their own community, keeping their members informed about it, and as far as they can, getting into active touch with such service them-

selves. In a word, the young people's society ought to be a kind of a committee of the whole on the part of the youth of the church to keep the church in contact with the freshest developments of Christian thought and manifestations of Christian activity. Every good work in the community ought to feel their hand in sympathetic touch upon it. They ought to hold what the Sunday-school has gained, and recover very much of what the Sunday-school has lost.

When all has been said that can be said for Sunday-school and young people's society, and every other auxiliary of the church, the pulpit is still the citadel of the church. When the pulpit is weak, the church is weak. When the pulpit is strong, the church is strong. The strength of the pulpit is in the strength of her youth. Nor is it only in the strength of her young men. The young women who are to be ministers' wives are a very large factor in the strength or weakness of the pulpit. Much more than this may be said. Henry Ward Beecher once said, "The minister gives back to the people in showers what he takes up from them in vapor." Sometimes he takes up very little, and sometimes he takes up very much. A congregation makes a minister quite as much as a minister makes a congregation. The Gospel "according to Luke" is also the Gospel according to Theophilus. When you write a letter, the one you are writing to is also the one you are writing through. Very few Christians

begin to recognize what part they have in every sermon they hear. Ten hearers are worth ten hundred sneerers to bring out the best that is in a man. Jesus sent men forth to testify of "what great things the Lord had done for them," but quite as emphatically he reiterated, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." His own preaching failed where a sympathetic hearing was lacking. The pulpit of to-day would be a hundredfold more effective in winning the world to the gospel if instead of a careless, captious, conventional, or merely conservative hearing the members of the churches, and especially the younger members, listened with whole-hearted devotion to the truth, with sincere desire for self-advancement, and with an intelligent appreciation of what real preaching is.

With all its faults and failures, the church is still the main medium for carrying the gospel to the world. Its work is of primary and permanent importance at the point of contact with childhood and youth. The young Christian will do well to put much of the emphasis of his own activity and assistance there. He ought to seek continually to enlarge and improve the working of the gospel through the church in these beginnings of the gospel in human lives. But let not the young Christian cease here. The pulpit has need of him, and indirectly but most importantly need of her. The pulpit is, and must remain, for many generations yet the immediate voice of the gospel to men. Never was the gospel

working so mightily as it is working in the pulpit of our time. Yet it suffers tremendously from the handicap of the pew. And here and there it is greatly helped by the pew, and especially by the pew where the young Christian sits, thinking the best thought of our time, eager to know the best that life has to give, ready to translate and transmit the message through all the innumerable opportunities which are open only to youth. Through such as these the gospel is working, indeed, in and through the church of to-day.



Quiz

1. What are the chief lines of helpful influence on the part of the Sunday-school?
2. Mention some marked contribution of the young people's movement to modern religious life.
3. What literary service is open to the young people of the church?
4. What is the importance of the pulpit in modern life?
5. What constitutes a good hearer?

Topics for Further Study

1. What is a "call" to the ministry?
2. What claim, if any, has the church upon the minister's wife?
3. What place should be given in the Sunday-school to the results of modern biblical criticism?
4. Has the young people's movement as such passed its zenith?
5. Does public criticism of the churches do more harm than good?

CHAPTER VII

THE GOSPEL WORKING FOR SOCIAL BETTERMENT

THE most serious handicap upon the working of the gospel to-day is the fact that the church, the main medium of the gospel, belongs too exclusively to the "better classes." We have gotten too far away from the "common people," who heard the gospel gladly from the lips of the Carpenter of Nazareth, whom we call Saviour and Lord. We are as respectable to-day as the people who crucified him long ago. And, if the meaning of Christ is the incarnation of God in humanity, there is much more danger than most of us are willing to allow, that our respectability may mistakenly crucify him again. For, whenever we crucify humanity, we do actually crucify him. Neither can we despise and maltreat the dependent and the defective classes, or refuse to carry the burdens of "them that are weak," without refusing the "mind of Christ" and putting him to our treadmill, or selling him for silver once more.

I walked in the city of Washington, on the splendid pavement between those more splendid buildings, the Hall of Congress and the Congressional Library. There passed between us and the library

a plain, two-wheeled cart, which jolted over the pavement most inharmoniously. In the cart were perhaps a dozen Negro convicts, dressed in dull, dirty, striped suits of dark gray, with sodden faces and listless eyes. They seemed utterly and absurdly out of place there. Yet, they held my eyes and my heart, and the remembrance of them is keener than all the beauty and splendor that I saw that day. As they wheeled sullenly and slowly by, I remarked to the companion at my side, "If Jesus Christ were here, he would care more about those dozen Negro convicts in that cart there than he would about all the spectacular public buildings in this capital city." And I verily believe that beyond question I spoke the truth.

The biggest thing about Christianity is the democracy of Jesus, the most absolute and uncompromising democracy the world has ever seen. This is the meaning of the nativity of Jesus: that when God would enter into humanity, he chose humanity shorn of all its trappings and trimmings. This is the meaning of Nazareth, and the carpenter's bench. This is the meaning of the fishermen who followed with him, and the women toward whom Jesus showed no sex-consciousness, but whom he treated simply as souls. If the church were as democratic as Jesus, she would be crucified to-day, and would rise again in all the power of his resurrection.

This is preeminently the problem of our time, to interpret the democracy of Jesus into terms of

modern life. We are afraid to do it and, therefore, the church has only half a following. Architecture, sculpture, literature, painting, music, institutions, and laws, these things are more to us than men. And until men, even Negro convicts, are more to us than all of these we are not more than partial and very imperfect followers of Christ.

How are we going to get at it? Not by "missions" and "slumming tours," and "rummage sales" for the poor, and giving away our second-hand clothes. These things are not altogether vain if they are not done in a vain spirit. But they are mere makeshifts at the best. Even "institutional churches" and "social settlements" are not sufficient to bridge the chasm between the respectable and the disreputable, between the classes and the masses, between ourselves and our conventional Christianity and our Lord and Master, who was known as "a friend of publicans and sinners." In the last analysis the problem is spiritual, not institutional; moral, not formal; and its solution is in the heart, and not in anything which head and hand alone can do. It is fortunate that this is so because the institutional church and the social settlement are hardly practicable for all. It costs money to begin them, and it costs a good deal more money to maintain them. And like the Y. M. C. A., their emphasis tends toward the temporal and the physical. This is not to undervalue their work. The temporal and the physical are with us, and as in former times, "fools

who came to scoff remained to pray," much more is it true that men who come for soup do sometimes get a real inner salvation, and young men who learn the latest in athletics sometimes learn that more ancient wisdom, that "bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." But all who have had anything to do with what is commonly called institutional work, if they have themselves any spiritual vision and have entered into the heart of the Christian experience will confess that the results of this material ministry are often profoundly disappointing and exceedingly meager in genuinely spiritual results. Institutional work is better than a purely dogmatic work, and the institutional church is richer in life product than many a church which mistakes ritual or theological definition for Christianity. But this type of social betterment work is not practicable in every place, and if it were, it would not solve the social problems of our day. The solution lies in the realm of the spirit, and is not only sufficient to all the need, but it is also open to those who follow Jesus everywhere.

"What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" asked the Jews of old. And this was Jesus' own reply: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And this is still the answer, and it is sufficient to the social problem of our time. The first great work of the

church if it is going to "reach the masses" is to believe on Jesus, to catch his spirit, to share his ideal, to live his life among men, to incarnate human needs and bear the burden of human sorrow and suffering and sin with him. Nothing less than this will do, whether it is ritual, dogma, or institution. Work for social betterment is first and fundamentally the realization of social identity with all our fellow-men through fellowship with the Son of man.

The first thing a young Christian, or any other Christian can do to help his fellows who are less competent or less comfortable than himself, is to try to understand them. It is easy enough to patronize peculiar activities of one kind and another to very little profit. The fruit of this sort of activity may be only pharisaic pride on the one side, and ill-concealed contempt on the other side. This is where many of our "city missions" fail. Likewise social betterment work is a delusion and a snare if it is undertaken in anything less than a spirit of absolutely honest human fellowship. And if a man has an absolutely honest human fellowship in him, he will find ways to express it effectively, whether ordinary social betterment work is open to him or not. Let him get right with his fellows first of all himself, then shall he see clearly in what ways he may help them most in his own particular situation and with his own peculiar gifts.

We have heard much about "getting right with God." No man is right with God who is not right

with men. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee: Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." To paraphrase this saying of Jesus a little, "Get right with men if you would get right with God." No man loves God who hates his fellows. Neither does any man honor God who despises his fellows. The man who rejects or contemns anything that is human, thereby rejects and contemns something that is divine. We measure our actual attitude toward God always by our actual attitude toward men. Misunderstand men and you misunderstand God. Misuse men and you misuse God. Take men lightly and you take God lightly. The way into the heart of the eternal is forever through the heart of humankind.

Social betterment work at the bottom is a matter of individual moral attitude toward men. The spirit of it, which is always the important thing about it, is just as much at home in the Sunday-school as it is in the Y. M. C. A. It is just as applicable to the church social as to the soup kitchen or the social settlement bath. The young people's society may act as a channel for it just as truly as a labor lecture course. It will make the pulpit live again, and will go farther than any amount of entertainment to fill up the empty pews.

The biggest thing that any one of us can do for social betterment is to better our own relations to

our fellows, one and all. Begin at home by working out the gospel there in the difficult rôle of family and neighborhood intimacies. Carry your zeal for social betterment into Sunday-school and young people's society, and church, and let it work there for the disintegration of all overemphasis of individual rights and privileges. Social betterment would come a great deal faster in the world outside if there were less of egotism and exclusiveness in religious circles. A church that is not truly democratic is not truly Christian. The pomp and paraphernalia of Romanism are offensive to many of us, since they seem to contradict so glaringly the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Yet many Protestant churches are really more exclusive than Rome, more provincial, more dominated by this or that person or clique. The largest service the churches can do to the cause of social betterment is first of all to give themselves whole-heartedly to the democratic spirit, to open their doors to men and women without respect to intellectual or moral caste lines. Let the churches, like the individual, begin at home. Charity does not mean first of all almsgiving. What it does mean let the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians declare. This is the charity which properly begins at home. When the church recognizes that eloquence and knowledge and prophecy and faith and almsgiving and even martyrdom for the truth's sake are less than love, and when within her own borders she shows forth

that long-suffering, all-enduring, and all-comprehending love which the apostle so wonderfully analyzes, then will her ministry for social betterment be like unto the ministry of Jesus himself.

There is especial need of the democracy of Jesus, the appreciation of man as man, in all reformatory work. "The Son of man was revealed that he might destroy the works of the devil." And he is destroying them like "a consuming fire." But no man is quite fit to join him in this purifying work until he has cleansed himself of pride and egotism and the idea that he belongs to some superior sort of man. Temperance reform is a splendid work for social betterment, and a man can hardly identify himself too positively with the movement for a sober city or a sober State. But temperance work is too often touched with phariseeism. It is easier to fight the rum-seller than it is to save the rum-drinker. The strongest point that the saloons have in their fight against the churches is that they are often vastly more democratic. We shall never destroy the saloon in our great cities till the churches have made their cause much more the cause of the common man, and till the formalism of religious worship is more displaced by a healthful, hearty, human quality such as one finds in a certain crude way in the ordinary saloon. Let the young Christian who goes into reform work be very careful that he does not get away from the large humanity of Christ. He ought to be at least as demo-

cratic as the man in the street. If he is true to his Master he will be more democratic in fact.

Both the individual Christian and the individual church in whom this spirit of true Christian democracy abides, will find a multitude of ways of serving the cause of social betterment in their own particular place. Institutional features of one kind and another will be found which are adaptable to almost any situation. In this respect much of originality and freedom is to be desired. We are all overmuch prone to copy forms of service, rather than to seek the spirit and then allow it to work itself out to fit our own peculiar opportunities and needs. The Emmanuel Church found its own work, a work which is practicable also, it may be granted, in many other places. It does not follow, however, that the same spirit in which the Emmanuel Church went to work to serve the poor and the needy and the suffering of Boston will work out in the same measures for every country village church. Neither can every church be a Judson Memorial Institutional Church, nor a Moody's Institute. It is very hard to imitate and keep up first quality. Social needs are so complex, social opportunities so manifold, and life is so continually seeking to express itself in new forms, that we may well be cautious lest we mistake some borrowed motion toward social betterment for the one essential thing, the spirit of a Christlike identification of ourselves with our fellow-men. If we love men as Christ

loved them, we shall find our own ways in our own time and our own circumstances to make that love manifest to them. And if we lack that love, all our institutions and good ideas will be very largely in vain.

Because the social problem is so emphatically our problem to-day, and because the social spirit is breaking out in a hundred different ways, it is of first importance that we shall make no mistake here as to what is really the first thing. Social betterment does not necessarily mean that all our churches shall be institutional churches of the same type; or, indeed, of any recognized institutional type. It does not necessitate any kind of uniformity of method, but only a great Christian unity of mood. Let the young Christian learn the mind of Christ; that is, the mood of Christ toward men, and let him make that mood his own in relation to the men and women among whom he lives; let him use the church and the Sunday-school and the young people's society, and every other instrument and agency which he can influence to carry out this mood toward men; but let him never forget that the mind, the mood, the living spirit, is the beginning and end of it all. Social betterment will not come with anything less than a better social spirit on the part of us all. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the spirit of holiness." And this is open to us all. Dream not of millions with which you would endow this or

that good work. Nor yet of this or that device with which you will recreate the world. Rather seek for yourself that spirit which, if made perfect in all, would make all things perfect, and remember that the largest contribution which you or any one else can make toward the betterment of men is a heart which is wholly one with human sufferings and human needs and the very highest human ends.



Quiz

1. In what way is respectability a danger to the church?
2. Was there any sex-consciousness in the teaching of Jesus?
3. What is the fundamental thing in social betterment?
4. How is getting right with men related to getting right with God?
5. What are the difficulties in the way of general "institutional" methods as a part of ordinary church work?
6. What is a real Christian democracy of spirit?

Topics for Further Study

1. Are the churches respectable because they appeal most to the respectable classes, or because religion tends, through correct habits of life, to material well-being?
2. Does the democracy of Jesus imply ultimate social equality everywhere?
3. Is almsgiving on the whole an evil or a good?
4. Will the Emmanuel movement prove permanent?

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOSPEL WORKING FOR KINGDOM EXPANSION

No man believes in the gospel of Jesus Christ who believes in it for himself alone. Neither does any man believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ who believes in it for his own city or county or country alone. The gospel that a man holds, is for the world, or else it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is true that a man may have the missionary spirit and not have the gospel of Jesus Christ, or have it, if at all, in a very imperfect form. The religion of Mohammed is a missionary faith, but it is very far from the faith of Jesus. There are few stories which are at once so heroic and so pathetic as Francis Parkman's history of "The Jesuits in North America." What did they not endure of danger and hardship and suffering and cruel martyrdom? And this oftentimes for the pitiful purpose of squeezing a few drops of water out of a wet handkerchief surreptitiously on to the fever-heated brow of a dying child, not to cool its brow, but to save its soul. Their zeal and its immediate objective is in curious contrast with the missionary indifference of much modern liberalism.

Why should a man who believes in salvation

through sacrament or through ecclesiastical connection be so much more in earnest for the salvation of his fellows than the man who thinks larger thoughts of God? Why did the very Pharisees whom Jesus scored so unmercifully for their shallow, selfish faith, "compass sea and land to make one proselyte" with the ordinary result of such unethical enthusiasm that they made him "twofold more the child of hell" than themselves, when so many to-day who hold the Christian faith in more than ordinary purity are singularly indifferent to any active propaganda of their principles?

It is well to remember the strong saying of the first great missionary of Christianity, to the effect that neither the faith that can remove mountains nor the zeal by which a man gives his body to be burned, is of any large consequence without love. Yet, it is perplexing that faith and zeal should so often inspire men and women to greater effort and self-sacrifice than love itself. Or is this only apparently so?

Whatever the explanation of this problem, it is certain that the love wherewith Jesus himself loved the world, inspired in him the utmost of zeal to give his doctrine to the world. He was far removed from the petty proselytizing spirit of the Pharisees, but he was also far removed from the indolent indifference of a self-complacent Christianity. His one passion was the kingdom of God, and the one supreme end of all his ministry was to make that king-

dom known to men. Nothing less than this is absolutely Christian. So far as any man cares more for money-getting, or any other kind of getting more than he cares about getting men into the kingdom of God, and getting the kingdom of God into men, he is out of harmony with Christ. If his doctrine interferes with the dissemination of the gospel of the kingdom, it is to that extent, at least, out of harmony with the doctrine of Jesus. And, if he has less zeal than men who have a less intelligent faith, there is something seriously the matter with his faith, however superficially intelligent it may appear. A faith that is not a missionary faith, whatever excellencies it may have, lacks a good deal of being the faith of Jesus.

The early church was a missionary church. Indeed, the church has always been a missionary church when it has been in actual touch with the spirit of Jesus. The Reformation church was a missionary church. So also were the churches which Methodism kindled into something like apostolic life. Whenever the spirit of Jesus has worked outside of the churches in some great enthusiasm for humanity, as in the movement for the overthrow of human slavery, missionary zeal and self-sacrifice have always been manifest. False faiths and false enthusiasms also have their missionary zeal, it is true, as weeds have their upspringing and self-asserting qualities. But a true faith and hope can no more be without missionary en-

thusiasm and prosper in a world where falsehood is to be found on every hand, than one may expect a profitable harvest from a plant which is without self-assertive qualities. However excellent the plant may be in other respects, it will utterly fail in the struggle for existence with more aggressive and assertive forms of life. So has every church failed and every movement which has not had in it much of the missionary spirit.

Jesus affirmed in many forms the expansive character of his kingdom. It was to be like the mustard seed in the contrast between its humble and apparently insignificant beginnings and its later large and impressive growth. It was to be like the leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, a very large quantity of flour from the standpoint of individual need, or even the need of the ordinary family, and by and by the whole was leavened. The Great Commission is a commission to evangelize the whole earth. The more clearly the character of Jesus' teaching is understood the more does one perceive the truly universal application of his doctrine and the imperative mood in which it stands toward all humankind. To deny it to any part of the world is to deny the very heart of the message itself, and no man who really knows what the gospel is can fail to feel its inevitably universal appeal. The strange thing is not that every Christian church which has any claim to the Christian name is more or less

missionary in its outlook and activities. Much stranger is it that any such church can think itself alive at all if it does not throb through and through with the passion to give its gospel to the whole earth as rapidly and as compellingly as it is possible to send forth the word. There is more excuse for the military missionism of Mohammedanism than there is for the dead indifference of many a so-called Christian church. Better a pagan who thinks he has something worth while for the world and is mad with zeal to give it to the whole earth than a "Christian" who claims a faith which is for all ages and all nations, and is too absorbed in himself and his own narrow environment to make any attempt to tell the world his good news. Either he does not believe that his "good news" is good for much, or else he is not good for much himself.

The democracy of Jesus means more than the leveling up of classes to the one vast fellowship of the sons and daughters of God where there can be no high and no low. It means also, and quite as imperiously, the passing of all provincialism and lesser patriotism into the highest patriotism of all, the final fellowship of humankind, the universal household of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven cannot be less expansive than this and be the kingdom of heaven indeed. And no man is in the kingdom of heaven very far who does not long and pray and work for the day when every other man shall be also there.

Fortunately ours is a missionary age. We have the opportunity for missionary effort as never in the history of the world before. When William Carey looked up from his cobbler's bench at the map of the world, a little more than a century ago, not only were the doors of many nations closed to any would-be missionary of the cross, but the material means of giving that gospel were nothing like as adequate as they are to-day. Carey had the printing press indeed, though printing itself was crude and clumsy enough when compared with the processes of publication to-day. And the railroad, the telegraph, the telephone, and a hundred other devices which have to do more or less directly with intercommunication between men and nations, were yet to come. If all this improvement in the material instruments of communication does not make for greater interest in telling to the earth the story of Jesus Christ and his message to men, it can only be that we do not think that story and that message actually worth while. The young Christian who can read even the "Scientific American" and not arise from it with enlarged missionary interest and enthusiasm, has not yet learned to make the kingdom of God first in his thoughts.

Neither does any man or woman appreciate the age in which we live in an economic way who does not recognize the missionary appeal. It is no mere coincidence that modern machinery and modern missions were born in the same country and about

the same time. The expansion of material production was bound to break down the barriers between nations, and necessitate foreign markets as wide as the world. Commerce would have been clogged long ago but for these new channels for the wider distribution of goods. Had these channels been opened without reference to religion, they must have been very much narrower and shallower, and the results must have been mischievous beyond measure, both to the heathen and the Christian world. They would have been narrower and shallower because the needs of men who are barbarian are nothing like as broad and deep as the needs of men who are Christian. The man whom Jesus healed was seen sitting "clothed and in his right mind." There is a close connection between a right mind and the demand for clothing and all the other good things which make for civilization. And had the missionaries of commerce been able to create some crude demand for their manufactures without the missionaries of the cross to go before them, the result to heathendom and civilization may be measured in a way by the appalling conditions which prevailed in some of the islands of the seas where foreign seamen added the vices of civilization to the ignorance and lawlessness of untutored peoples. The world would have been overwhelmed with a lava flow of iniquity which one hesitates to more than suggest.

Fortunately the missionary was first. The true

“advance agent of prosperity,” as many of our big business men are coming to recognize, is the man who makes men out of barbarians by showing them the way into life. Elizabeth Barrett Browning says somewhere:

“We must be here to work,
And he who works can only work for men,
And not to work in vain must understand hu-
manity
And so work humanly, and raise men’s bodies
Still by raising souls, as God did first.”

This indeed is always the divine method, to “raise men’s bodies still by raising souls.” And this is missions. City missions, home missions, foreign missions, they are all absolutely in line with good business sense. The young business man who does not see this needs a course in elementary economics. Whenever you raise men’s bodies, as you always do when you actually raise their souls, you do at the same time raise the demand for all legitimate goods. “The stars in their courses fought against Sisera,” and all the stars of our economic world are fighting against provincialism and against barbarism and against heathenism, and for the coming of that kingdom of God which, if it be not “meat and drink” is, nevertheless, on the side of “more abundant life,” even in the things which commerce supplies.

Missionary interest is both common-sense religion and common sense in business. It is real Christianity, and it is real modern enterprise. We shall neither hold our own in faith nor in commerce if we do not give the gospel to those who are unevangelized. The gospel works inevitably toward kingdom expansion. All the commercial forces of the day are working also toward the larger life of men, which is the ultimate of Christian faith. The first impulse of the new convert, to tell his faith abroad, is central in all living Christian faith. If we have gained in understanding of the gospel, we shall have gained also in the desire to make it known, for the more one knows the gospel the more he sees how naturally and needfully it belongs to all mankind. Likewise every gain in the democratic spirit makes for missionary interest, since it includes all humanity in a large, loving human sympathy which will not be content with anything less than the best for all our fellows. Modern business also is emphatically on the side of missions when it is broadly and intelligently viewed. The young Christian who is enthusiastic for missions may, therefore, know that he is but thinking Christ's gospel in the terms of Jesus' own thinking, and is one with the profoundest and mightiest movements of our time, the expansion of business, the expansion of the democratic spirit, and the expansion of real religion in the world. Moreover, he can justify his interest in missions by the miracles

which the missionary spirit has worked and is working in modern times.



Quiz

1. How do you explain the missionary zeal of many whose gospel message is most imperfect?
2. Is a selfish or self-complacent indifference to missionary activity less mischievous than a blind and intolerant sectarianism?
3. What is the economic importance of missions?
4. Does religion pay from the standpoint of general commercial consideration?
5. What are the missionary motives which modern conditions emphasize?

Topics for Further Study

1. Is there any close connection between the invention of machinery and the modern missionary movement?
2. Has biblical criticism weakened the missionary impulse?
3. Is the material or the moral first in the quickening of nations?
4. Is the enlargement of missionary benevolence dependent in any marked degree upon the correction of our present missionary methods?

CHAPTER IX

THE GOSPEL'S MODERN MIRACLES

IN the "Missionary Review of the World" for January, 1897, there is a brief article under the caption, "A Mighty Miracle." It is the story of a woman evangelist in India, Miss Stevens, "Evangelist Elizabeth," and a heathen priest in the vicinity of Madras, to whom she gave certain of her tracts, after she had prayed in his presence for the blessing of God upon them. He was decked out in all his horrid priestly gear, and was inwardly furnished with all manner of clever argument against the gospel, having the reputation of being one of the ablest dialecticians in that part of India. He had himself posed before the people as a god, and had received homage as such. The tracts had apparently only an ill effect upon him, for a few days afterward he poured out his abuse upon a native worker because of them. The preacher answered him never a word, but read to him the first chapter of John, and then, kneeling, wrestled in prayer for him. Not long afterward Miss Stevens was astonished to see this same priest standing in her own room, and to hear him say, "Jesus has conquered me." He asked baptism, but was advised to consider care-

fully what the step meant to him. Nevertheless he returned, and in such childlike spirit proffered his request again that he was received, the signs of his pagan priesthood were removed, and he became almost immediately an effective preacher of the gospel which he had despised and opposed.

“O Galilean, thou hast conquered,” are the words attributed to the apostate emperor Julian, when his effort to stay the Christian conquest of the Roman Empire proved futile. This ancient conquest of Rome by the early church has been cited often as one of the miracles of the ages, a kind of crowning demonstration of the supernatural origin of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, in our own day, the conquest of heathen nations and peoples by this same gospel has been a no less divine demonstration of the presence and power of God in and through the gospel of Christ. The Hindu priest's confession, “Jesus has conquered me,” is worthy to be written side by side with the more famous saying of the unhappy emperor, and there is every reason to believe that the Christian conquest of India and heathenism generally will be reckoned by the ages to come as no less miraculous than the successes of the gospel in the earliest centuries of missionary endeavor.

The miracles of missions are by no means all the miracles of our faith. There are miracles of healing in the name of Christ in these modern days which will compare favorably with those recorded in any

century since the Son of man himself "went about doing good." Many of these miracles are wrought by the physicians themselves, and with the use of the latest scientific appliances. We do the gospel of Christ injustice when we exclude from the works of Jesus all the indirect ministry of his spirit whereby Christian nations have been quickened into the better understanding of the laws of God in the realm of the physical and have learned to co-operate more effectively with him. All that is best in modern civilization belongs, in a large way, to those "greater works than these" which Christ promised that his disciples should do. But missions, at home and abroad, are a kind of first fruits everywhere of the marvelous working of the spirit of Christ among men.

Yet the miracles of missions are by no means confined to the conversion of the heathen abroad and the outcast at home. In many respects the missionaries themselves are the supreme miracle of modern missions. Not since the days of the apostles has there been a greater galaxy of splendid names than the story of modern missions affords. The missionary activity of the church, quite apart from its direct results in the saving of those to whom the gospel has been preached, has justified its cost many fold by its priceless product of heroic men and women who have written their names with the heroes of faith whom the writer of the Hebrews so inspiringly enumerates.

The young Christian who does not know something of William Carey and Adoniram Judson, of Robert Morrison and Alexander Duff, of Robert Moffat and David Livingstone, and John Williams and Bishop Patton, and a host of others before and after them, "of whom the world was not worthy," is almost as unpardonable as an aspirant for American military promotion who had never heard of Hannibal and Alexander, of Cæsar and Charlemagne, of Napoleon and Wellington, or of Washington, General Jackson, and Ulysses S. Grant. These men themselves, last named, are the study of every man who counts himself a soldier and seeks success in arms. How shall our Christian youth excuse themselves for their scant acquaintance with even the names of those whose character and career is such a mighty demonstration of the greater good and more enduring glory of the warfare in which the followers of the Prince of Peace are engaged?

One need not go away from home for that matter to find these modern miracles in the missionaries themselves. Christianity has never done anything greater in its way than the raising of Jerry McCauley from the dead. This derelict of the New York slums was more hopeless, if possible, than the heathen priest or any heathen outcast. Yet the work of the gospel in him gave the world a Christian hero worthy to be compared for self-sacrificing devotion and utmost love for the fallen among his fellows with the greatest of the apostles of ancient

days. Here was a Christian athlete and wrestler with whose record of immortal achievement in himself and for others every man who aspires to spiritual stature and strength ought to be thoroughly familiar. Nevertheless, Jerry McCauley was no more of a miracle than was Dwight L. Moody, though Moody came not from the slums. The Northfield lad who, without an education, came forth from that farmhouse in northern Massachusetts to electrify the world with the power of a Christ-inspired personality and made of his mustard-seed beginnings such a mighty tree of righteousness was a veritable apostle to our times. And McCauley and Moody are but two of a multitude of men and women whose being and doing in the spirit of Christ make modern Christian biography such a rich field of holy inspiration. Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, is said to have boasted of her boys, "These are my jewels." With much more justification may the church of modern days point to her sons of strength who are shaping the empire which shall never pass away and say of them, both for what they are and for what they have done, "These are my miracles."

The miracles of missions are manifest, not only in the missionaries themselves and in their works, but quite as wonderfully in the churches at home. The best answer to any Baptist objector to foreign missions is the Baptist denomination. One need not exaggerate the weakness of our denomination

before Judson came to us out of the bosom of New England Congregationalism, nor the relatively feeble growth of that wing of our denomination which rejected the call of God in Judson's appeal, to prove beyond peradventure of doubt that great as have been the achievements of Baptist missionaries on the foreign field, the heathen have done more for us than we have done for them. Or, if you like the statement better, the reflex influence of foreign missionary effort has been worth more to the churches at home than all the cost of it abroad. Our own denominational growth, since we heard and heeded the call from the Macedonia of heathenism, is one of the most marvelous results among all the marvels of missions. How any Baptist, young or old, can be indifferent to foreign missions in the face of this practical demonstration of the splendid dividends which we as a denomination have received from our reluctant investment in this forward march of the faith passes all understanding. Yet, when have miracles ever convinced men against their own captious and covetous moods?

This is not a book upon missions, and I do not propose to fill even this chapter with the vain attempt to catalogue the conquests of modern missionary advance. The literature of missions is abundant, and most accessible, and there is needed for an intelligent appreciation of the strength and success of missions only the willing mind and a fair degree of application. What the writer of the fourth Gospel says

of the miracles of Jesus himself is exceedingly apropos with reference to the miracles wrought in his name on the mission fields at home and abroad: "If they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." But what is written and what may easily be read by any young Christian who will give a very moderate amount of time and attention to these modern miracles, is enough to prove again that "Jesus is the Christ," and that believing in him men may still find "life through his name."

Read what God has wrought in Africa since the days of Moffat and of Livingstone there. Florence Nightingale, herself one of the finest products of the last century, whose sun still lingers in our own, said of David Livingstone, that he was the greatest man of the nineteenth century, that century of almost countless mighty men. Read his story till the spirit of that Christlike life flows through all the channels of your own. Then read the latest words of Theodore Roosevelt concerning what missions have done and are doing in the once "dark continent" where the glow of the morning of a Christian faith and life now touches even the long-sought sources of the Nile.

Or read the story of China and Japan, and consider the miracle of Nippon, and the slower but hardly less marvelous awaking of the vast "Celestial Empire." Those who watched beside the sea

the feeding of the five thousand with that handful of bread and fish, long ago, saw a sight less marvelous than the refreshing of millions upon millions of men and women, and the renewal of a whole nation of nations through the apparently puerile efforts of Robert Morrison and his coadjutors and successors in China. When Morrison was about to sail for China, and was settling the matter of fare and freight with a "practical" shipowner, the man of business said to the Christian argonaut, who seemed to him to be going out after a visionary "golden fleece," "Now, Mr. Morrison, do you really expect that you will make an impression on the idolatry of the Chinese Empire?" And Morrison answered the smile which thinly veiled the practical man's contempt with a dignified severity becoming one of the prophets of Israel, "No, sir; but I expect that God will." Nor was the missionary's expectation in vain as concerns even his own years. Morrison, in a measure, "lived to see of the fruit of his soul, and was satisfied."

In no irreverent spirit may it be said, but with utmost acknowledgment, that it is the work of Christ himself, and not our own, that greater than the works which he did when he walked upon the sea or stilled the storm-tossed waters of Galilee have been the works of the missionaries of the cross in the far stormier and more uncertain islands of the Pacific. John Williams' "Narratives of Missionary Enterprise" have been compared by an eminent

prelate to "The Acts of the Apostles." The martyrdom of Williams in the New Hebrides recalls, indeed, the martyrdom of Stephen, and the success of the gospel in the south seas is as thrilling as the story of Pentecost.

And what shall be said of the marvels of missionary success which have crowned the long waiting and unwearied labors of our own missionaries among the Telugus? Or what of Mackay and Uganda? Or what of the McAll Mission in France? Or what of the transformation which is going on in the Philippines, more marvelous than when the Master himself "manifested his glory" at Cana in Galilee by turning the water into wine? Is not the whole story of missionary effort one long enlargement of this miracle, the Lord of Life turning the water of our weak endeavor into the satisfying draught which is making the whole earth jubilant with his joy?

The miracle goes on every day under our very eyes, and we are wondrous slow to see it and quick to forget. The apostles of Jesus themselves saw less of the mighty power of the gospel than our own generation is beholding. The modern world is one vast arena of Christian effort, a thousand-fold more expansive than the arena at Rome where weak women confounded the power of the Cæsars with their overcoming testimony for the Christ. And again men and women, even young men and maidens, are wrestling with the wild beasts and

wilder men, and are overturning nations with their message of the undying Christ. We need not look back across the centuries for our help and inspiration. The inspiration is here. We need not argue about the miracles of the past. The present miracle is its own witness. It is in our own land, and ought veritably to be a part of our own life.



Quiz

1. Can the word miracle be fairly used of any modern manifestation of the power of the gospel?
2. Are the works of modern engineers and other wizards of the material realm in any sense wonders of the gospel?
3. What is the first miracle of missions?
4. Are Baptists indebted to missions in any unusual degree; and, if so, where do you find the evidence of it?
5. Are we actually doing greater works to-day than Jesus did while here; and if so how do you account for it?
6. How can we make the miracles of missions a part of our own life?

Topics for Further Study

1. Who was Robert Moffat, and what were his relations with David Livingstone?
2. What part may be fairly claimed for missions as the awakener of Japan?
3. Will the Eastern nations, as they become more Christian, modify the forms of our Western Christianity?
4. If so, what type of heresy or what lines of influence may we most reasonably

expect? 5. Have missions produced as yet any characters among the heathen themselves of really heroic size? 6. Is the pursuit of foreign markets making for the Christianizing of the world? 7. Who is your favorite missionary hero, and why?

CHAPTER X

THE GOSPEL AND BUSINESS

THERE are two words in very common use to-day which nowhere appear in the Bible. These words are, employer and employee. Very much of the problem of Christian living centers about these words to-day. They at least suggest the wide difference between the "business" of the Bible and the "business" of our time.

In the Roman world of Jesus' day, one-half of the people or more were slaves. Our word "servant" is the old Roman word for slave, hardly changed at all as to form. Paul, signing himself "a servant of Jesus Christ," was, in fact, designating himself as a slave. He returned the slave Onesimus to his master, Philemon; but, as he had bowed himself to the lowness of a slave in relation to Christ, in the same relationship he lifts Onesimus to the dignity of a brother in the Lord. Though not in form the denial of slavery, the whole bearing of Paul in this matter was fundamentally contrary to any and all kinds of selfish commercialism between man and man.

In some quarters there is much talk of "wage-slavery" to-day. The ancient slave was, in some

respects, undoubtedly better off on the side of comfort and security than the less fortunate of modern industrial workers. He was not in constant dread of losing his job, the nightmare of a multitude of laborers to-day, and not always laborers of the poorer class alone. He had no such fear of the age limit, as prevails widely among the workmen of this present strenuous period of keenest industrial competition. And very frequently he was better housed and clothed and fed than is the laborer of the city now. The modern workman has this advantage, sometimes a dubious advantage enough as it works out in practical life, that he is technically his own master. In a great multitude of cases, it means little more than that he is compelled to shift for himself when his profitableness to his employer has passed, or some cheaper kind of labor, human or mechanical, is found to take his place and grind out greater dividends. He is not a workman, in the sense of the craftsman periods, of skilled individual labor, nor yet a slave in the sense that he is any man's property to be cared for, with at least the humanity with which an average man will care for the horse or dog that is spent and outworn. He is merely a "hand," which is in some ways the most terrible term that was ever used to designate the common soldier in the fearful battle for bread.

If modern industrialism has made the status of a multitude of workmen so hard that they are in a position of very doubtful advantage when com-

pared with the better class of slaves in ancient times, it has made even more difficult, if possible, the position of many a modern employer. If the Christian life is next to impossible in the sweatshop and the factories where unrestrained greed controls, it is not less difficult in the offices and "counting rooms" where the toll of such toil is taken. Imagine a race between two ancient galleys, driven each by its quota of whiplashed galley slaves! It would be hard enough for the driven slaves, under such circumstances, to keep a Christian spirit with the cords ever and anon biting their all but broken backs. It would be harder still for the man who wielded the whip to maintain anything approaching personal fellowship with Jesus Christ without throwing down his whip and leaving the ship. And to attempt this might mean a seat for himself on the oarsmen's bench with the slaves, and a worse master with the whip in hand over both him and them.

Grant that this illustration is severe, and does not fairly represent average industrial conditions in our modern world it is nevertheless but a heavily outlined picture of what prevails in many quarters—employee and employer both alike driven by the harsh necessities of business into a situation where real Christian living is tremendously and tragically difficult for both. Whatever the difficulties of work on the foreign field, and however great the call for heroism there, the difficulties of Christian

living at home in the heart of the market-place are hardly less, and the demand for heroes and martyrs in the business world is as great as it is anywhere on earth to-day. Neither shall we make business Christian nor deliver our brethren from bondage often fitly compared to that which Israel suffered in Egypt long centuries ago, until we recognize the severity of the conditions which do actually prevail and hear the voice of the Lord calling us to serve our less fortunate fellows at whatever cost to ourselves.

Yet, there is need of great common sense in all of this matter. Not the hard "business sense," which denies or defends the evils, and will hear nothing of any proposals which make less of immediate money than of the everlasting rights of man. Such "business sense" is not even good business, as the history of every reform movement has proven; much less is it the gospel of Jesus Christ. The sense that is needed is the sense of patience and kindness and justice to all. Jesus was not on the side of "class consciousness," and "class consciousness" is an exceedingly dangerous weapon to wield. Those who take up that sword are in great peril of perishing by it. Neither was Jesus on the side of immediate revolution wherewith to establish the better social order. Jesus spoke bravely, and even radically, on the side of the poor. His denunciation of social injustice was terrific at times. But the incident of wealth no more robbed a man of Jesus'

sympathy than did the incident of poverty. He had as little use for the covetousness of the "have nots" as for the covetousness of the "haves." He did not measure materialism by the size of its accidental and objective desire, but rather by the weight of its moral displacement in the soul of the man himself. The sense that we need is not the sense of material values, which tends, on the one side, to a riotous covetousness, and on the other side to an equally and possibly more dangerous repressive covetousness. The sense that we need is spiritual sense, the sense of life's larger values and man's deepest relations to the world about him and to his fellows. This is as far removed from the cold calculations of the mere moneymaker on the one hand, and the time-serving timidity of all those who think first of "vested interests," as it is from the ravenous rancor of the appetite-driven throng. It is the sense of God first of all, and in the best meaning of the words it is also "the sense of man." This is the preeminent need of every man who is in business to-day, whether he is employer or employee.

Most of current advice to young people who are in the midst of business life to-day is too much dominated by the philosophy of self-help. There is no doubt that this philosophy has had its victories, and victories which were worth while. But it does not seem to have occurred to many who are at pains to tell us that Jesus said nothing concern-

ing the social issues of his day—a very doubtful declaration—that neither did Jesus expatiate on the much-lauded economic virtues of our time, industry and thrift and enterprise and “getting on in the world.” I do not remember that he even so much as advised any of the young people of his time to “get an education.” This is not to be taken as implying any disparagement of education nor of any of the virtues mentioned above. It is good that every young Christian should get the best education to be had. It is good also that every young Christian cultivate the spirit of industry and economy and enterprise within the limits of that “mind of Christ” which moved him, “though rich,” yet, “for our sakes,” to “become poor.” But better than any of these things, good as they are in their place, and with only a Christian emphasis upon them, is the one great thing which Jesus did teach, the seeking “first” of that “kingdom of God and his righteousness” which is the real business of every Christian life. The passion for the kingdom of God, rightly understood, is the great need of modern business life. No man can be a Christian in business or anywhere else, though he may be a much esteemed moralist with a Christian name, unless something of the vision and passion of the kingdom of God is first in his heart.

A young woman, who was an applicant for church-membership, was asked by her pastor why she believed herself a Christian. Her reply, which

has been much quoted and commended, was this: "Because, sir, I sweep under the mats." And then she explained that before she became a Christian, in her work as a servant, she had slighted her sweeping wherever it did not show; but now she did it with conscientious thoroughness as "unto the Lord." Therefore she swept "under the mats."

It was a good answer, and reminds one of the famous and familiar verse by the devout George Herbert:

"A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
 Makes that an th' action fine."

The Christian spirit certainly works for faithfulness, and thoroughness, and conscientiousness, and all the finer individual characteristics. But it does not end here. The Christian in business will be more than industrious and thorough, and as capable as it is in him to be at his own particular task whether he would prefer that task or not. He ought not to be satisfied with any lower ideal of individual excellence nor to excuse himself on any plea for being a second-rate workman as compared with the man of the world. And he ought not to be satisfied with this individual excellence alone. He is in business to seek "first" the kingdom of God, and that kingdom cannot be confined to his own soul.

Henry Havelock made a great success of Chris-

tian living, though he lived it under the radically unchristian conditions of militarism. We have had other great and good soldiers who have served God and man most heroically in the camp and on the battlefield; and this, notwithstanding the fact that better than all warfare is the war against war. So also there are great "captains of industry," and common soldiers not a few who are serving Christ splendidly in the camps of industry and on the sanguinary fields of fiercest commercial competition. It is a limited and qualified service in the one case as in the other, but that it is real Christian living can hardly be successfully denied. We are coming more and more to appreciate the limited character of Christian living in the midst of an unchristian economic environment. We need more than economic Havelocks to show forth the beauty of Christian living in camp and battlefield; we need our economic Tolstoys to cry out against the vast wickedness of economic war. But we must not judge in the one case more harshly than in the other, nor deny that even a "Napoleon of finance" may have some high qualities, and may, in the providence of God serve the ends of that kingdom which shall never pass away.

"Diligent in business" is a very ancient exhortation; but there is still place for it in the armory of Christian advice. War is not only passing, but even while it lingers here, its conditions are being modified by the "Red Cross" and other manifesta-

tions of the spirit of Christ. We may believe that Christ would not approve war, but we cannot keep him from the battlefield when men are actually there. Neither can we keep him out of the stock exchange, nor away from the railroad headquarters, or the factory, though these be not to his mind. Let us, by all means, work for the "new birth" in the business world, when all our industrialism shall be converted into a Christlike ministry to men, and let us no more despair of this transformation than we will of the possible salvation of human individual derelicts like Jerry McCauley, or of religious and political institutions apparently more hopeless than he. But while we work for this large ideal, let us work also every man over against his own door and make our own business as Christian as it may be under whatever actual conditions we find. Let us also "sweep under the mats" and do our work as if Christ himself were our employer. Let us receive our employee as another Onesimus, even though he has not yet found his Paul. Let us be "diligent in business," but willing to fail if thereby the kingdom of God may the more quickly succeed. Despise not the martyrdom which none will applaud, and which may be reckoned as only incompetence or worse. Nowhere in all heathendom to-day is the opportunity for splendid, self-sacrificing service greater than it is in the apparently unromantic and unheroic surroundings of ordinary business life. And when the roll of martyrs and

mighty servants of God is made up, it will include many who were only known as "business men," and very ordinary business men from the standpoint of their fellows in whom the vision of truth and righteousness was dim. The best success that any man can have in business is to succeed in keeping himself clean, and kindly, and high-minded, holding fast in the midst of the material his own faith in the things that are unseen and eternal, and working steadfastly through the yielding of his own more immediate and impressive prosperity for the growth of commercial conditions which Christ himself would approve. Nothing less than this is business success.



Quiz

1. What were the industrial conditions of the world in which Jesus had part when upon earth?
2. What is the so-called "wage slavery" of our day?
3. What do you understand by the philosophy of "self-help"?
4. How do you explain the silence of Jesus concerning industry and thrift and enterprise and education and like individual virtues?
5. Who was Henry Havelock, and how did he distinguish himself?
6. What forms does martyrdom take in business life?

Topics for Further Study

1. The origin of slavery.
2. The rise of modern industrialism, and the special characteristics of the

" machine age " in industry. 3. The self-help teaching of Samuel Smiles, and its relation to present-day economics. 4. Christian living and military life. 5. How much money can a Christian properly make? 6. Ideal business men.

CHAPTER XI

THE GOSPEL AND RECREATION

WHETHER is it easier to-day to live a Christian life at work or at play? Certainly it is not easy to make one's work always measure up to the high standard of Jesus. Many a weary disciple imagines that if he might but change his task, or better yet, be released from all necessity of doing any unchosen task for the sake of mere bread and butter, that Christian living would be much more practicable than it is. But if life were one long holiday, and we were wholly free to use our time just as we would, the average of Christian living would probably fall rather than rise.

If there is any need to prove this, the lives of the "leisure class" afford abundant proof. Here and there one is found living for high ideals and for his fellows in some truly worthy way, but in the main those who have nothing to do are doing nothing that is very much worth while. They do not seem to find their much desired freedom a stimulus to lives of devotion. Nor may we think from the way in which most of us spend our brief play periods that playing more and working less would make us better Christians than we are.

The little fellow who sat at the table with us was just learning to talk. One of his favorite words, expressive of a great deal of human nature, was, "More, more!" He seldom said this with respect to the mush or any other such prosaic dish. But he used the word vociferously with respect to the doughnuts, to the considerable embarrassment of his mother, who was afraid of more serious embarrassment for him.

Few of us are crying for more work, but a great many of us are crying for more play, with little more wisdom than the child. Even the churches are compelled to make much of entertainment, and the chief attraction of the young people's movement to many is the "doughnuts" in prospect, of which they never seem to have enough. There is a good deal of spiritual indigestion on the part of those who are very young in Christian living, because they will have little of plain, substantial, blood and muscle making food, and will insist upon the cake and candy and condiments of "fun" and much mis-called "recreation."

Nothing is recreation which does not recreate. Some of our play does this, and is, therefore, good for us, and not to be condemned. A sense of humor is almost indispensable to a well-balanced character. The man who cannot enjoy a laugh has not yet entered into life. Play is an instinctive exercise of youth, and as we have discovered in these modern days, has an important physiological bearing upon

health and growth. Of play of the right kind we have hardly yet enough, despite the exaggerated emphasis upon some aspects of the play life. The churches have made too much of entertainment and too much of certain states of more or less abnormal excitement, but they have seldom made enough of all-around wholesome enjoyment. Goodness and gladness have much more than an alliterative affinity for each other. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, . . then will I teach transgressors thy ways" was the prayer of a man who judged rightly that spiritual life and health and spiritual usefulness are also related to joy and play.

The artists are largely responsible for our over-emphasis upon the melancholy of Jesus. He was undoubtedly "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but this might also be said of some of our modern humorists who have ministered of mirth to others while walking in a Gethsemane. Jesus was not a humorist. Neither does he make the use that Paul made of the games and sports of his time to illustrate Christian activity and excellence. Certainly there was no slightest touch of frivolity in him, and on the surface of the records there is little appearance of play. But the fact that his father and mother could go a day's journey without missing him, so as to be at all concerned about him, supposing him to be somewhere in the caravan, indicates that as a boy of twelve he was no unnatural prig, but a healthy, hearty, happy

child. And the further fact that they sought him for three days before it seems to have occurred to them to look for him in the temple, together with his own mature insistence upon the naturalness of his whole attitude toward his Father in heaven, speaks also for a lad who was wholly and most joyfully alive. There are traces of keenest humor here and there in his teaching, as when he exaggerated concerning the "beam" in the critic's own eye. Much of his argument against the Pharisees was ridicule, cutting indeed, but more mirth-provoking by far to his contemporaries than it appears to us. And in his great eulogy of John the Baptist, the apostle of seriousness in religion, Jesus refers to the play of the children in the streets, playing funeral and playing weddings, and compares himself and his ministry to the martial procession with its dance and song. Indeed, his enemies called him, according to his own confession, "a wine-bibber and a glutton," as compared with the abstemious recluse who shunned the social and festive board. Jesus was not only very much a man among men, but there is every reason to believe that "nothing that is human" was "foreign" to him. And mirth and play belong to normal and healthy life.

Christians have just as much right to all manner of reasonable and helpful recreation as other men. That they may forego their rights in the interests of a Christian expediency with regard to their own peculiar opportunities and responsibilities to others

is also true, and a truth of very great consequence, requiring much Christian common sense to apply. But nothing is wrong in and of itself for a Christian which is not also wrong for others. Church-membership and Christian profession do not create a special moral code. Every man, whether he confesses faith in Christ or not, or whether he denies or affirms Christian obligation is, as a matter of fact, bound to acknowledge God's first claim upon his life. It is mischievous to admit even by implication that a man can escape his responsibility to be all that he can be for himself and the world. Every man's life is a stewardship whether he will or not. Ignoring the fact does not cancel the obligation, or make less serious his failure to live up to his opportunity. No man has any more right to throw himself away than has any other man. Every man will be held responsible for all that he might have been and done in and for the kingdom of God.

"I would like to join the church, and I know I ought to live a Christian life, but I dearly love to dance, and I do not think that a Christian ought to dance," said a young woman to me some years ago. I had not raised the question of dancing at all, and had no desire to do so. Get a man or woman right on fundamentals and incidentals will take care of themselves. We have made and do make altogether too much of dancing, and card-playing, and theatergoing, and all that kind of incidental in so far as we have allowed these things to obscure the

real issue, the question of questions, the conscious dedication of a man's heart and life to God as the one thing without which everything else is vain. The fact is that feeling as she did that dancing was contrary to the highest type of living, that young woman had no more right to dance outside of the church than in it. She was bound, as every other woman is bound, to act up to her best vision of achievement for herself and usefulness toward others. I am not saying that dancing is wrong. Neither am I saying that it is right. I refuse to be side-tracked from the main issue. The fact is that you belong to God. All that you are, and all that you can do is his, for his kingdom. Your own happiness is bound up with this divine intention in you and for you. To defeat it is to defeat yourself. To trifle with it is to trifle with yourself. God wants nothing of you but what is best for you. Whatever is consistent with this is yours, and no church can take it away from you. Neither can anybody give you what is not yours, what is contrary to your whole being's aim and end. It is just as wrong for me to eat poison whether I am a member of a pure food club or not. The wrong is in the injury it does me, and through me the society to which I belong. No one has the right of suicide in whole or in part, except as he lays down his life for the world. Neither has any one the right of moral suicide, either to the extent of refusing moral obligation and service altogether or of refusing it

with reference to any act or feature of his life. A man has no more right to cut his ear off than he has to cut his head off. Neither has a man a right to cut off one part of his life and mutilate himself with reference to the end for which he is alive. And that end, whether he knows it and recognizes it or not, is to do God's will.

We shall never settle this question of amusements and entertainment by discussing in detail this or that petty piece of self-indulgence. We must get back to first principles or we shall never get forward toward perfection. Whatever makes you more of a man, or a woman, is right for you, and nothing is right which makes you less. The application of this principle you will have to settle for yourself. If you settle it dishonestly by any kind of subterfuge or evasion, you will suffer the loss in yourself. If you exclude anything which you might fairly include, you are that much the poorer, unless your exclusion has worked some larger gain. If you include what in all simplicity and unselfishness you ought to have excluded, you are as bound to pay the price as if you had taken hurtful food into your body. God is not whimsical. He works through law, and always his law is working, whether we wisely work with it or try to get the better of it. We never do get "the better" of it, but always the worse when we are out of harmony with his purposes for us.

A glass of wine is wrong, not because the man

who drinks it is a church-member or a minister, though it may be granted that these considerations might enter into the mischievous influence of this or that man's indulgence in wine-drinking. But the primary evil of it is the mischief it does the man himself, and the tendency of the habit to make or mar his usefulness toward others. If wrong at all it is wrong because indulgence in wine-drinking makes a man less a man in relation to the kingdom of God. Judged by the same standard a cup of coffee may be wrong, though taken at a church social; it may lessen a man's value to himself and to society. There is a vast amount of very dubious devotion to late refreshments in our churches, and much harm to clean living and high thinking by reason of the animalism which prevails at many a religious feast. The churches have a long way to go yet to set the world a worthy example of real temperance—that is, real self-control with respect to appetite.

The young Christian may permit himself any amount of play and any kind of play which contributes to his manhood. He ought to deny himself any sport or "refreshment" or enjoyment which makes him less a man. Whatever subtracts from his self-respect is wrong for him, however innocent it may be in itself. Any indulgence which injures his influence for good is too expensive for him, though he have a "season ticket" free. With regard to self-respect, he ought to study for a large

view of his own manhood. With regard to his influence he ought to study for a large view of the manhood of others, their ultimate and not only their immediate welfare. In both of these estimates he needs to be guided again by first principles, the desire to advance the kingdom of God in others and not only to win them for this or that institution or system of thought, and for himself the determination to be a Christlike man, and not merely an acceptable church man. Only let his ideal of Christ be wholesome and actually Christian, and not a weak, modern imitation of some medieval ideal. Then may he laugh as heartily as any on occasion, or take his place on the athletic field, or join in games a-plenty, or indulge with moderation in late refreshments, or enter into the vacation season with all the enthusiasm of the most devoted lover of fishing and hunting and the study of nature, with only one sensible check to hold his head up lest he stumble, the thought that he must be always and everywhere a clean and conscientious man, playing and working alike, "as in his great Taskmaster's eye."

A Christian may do anything, at any time, and in any company which will forward the interests of the kingdom of God. And those interests are as wide as all wholesome life. He may do nothing legitimately under any kind of dispensation which will harm himself or others. This applies to his business as much as to his recreation. It applies to his recreation as much as to his business. It is

hard to weep unselfishly, and sorrow like a Christian. It is harder yet to laugh always as a Christian should. Nowhere to-day is there greater need of conscience and common sense than with respect to recreation. Much of it is dissipation, and some of it is very mischievous dissipation in religious guise. None of it is good or right, for the Christian or for anybody else, which does not make the world better in some way or other, in greater or less degree. Go where you please so that you can take the interests of the kingdom of God with you, and play as you please, so that your play does not undo any of the good work of the world. Only remember that working or playing we are always His.



Quiz

1. Is Christian living more difficult with reference to business or recreation to-day?
2. What can be said for humor and play as features of Christian character and life? Is there any evidence of humor in Jesus?
3. Is a church-member under more obligation to live soberly and earnestly than other men or women?
4. On what principle shall we determine our rights and duties with reference to the so-called doubtful amusements?

Topics for Further Study

1. Relative religiousness of the leisure class now and in former times, is it greater or less, and what

are the causes? 2. The use of the games and sports of apostolic times by the Apostle Paul in the illustration of Christian truth. 3. The sports of the ancient world and modern athletics and amusements from the standpoint of the gospel type of life. 4. Has the church made too much or too little of abstinence from the theater and the dance? 5. What is a Christian attitude toward present-day college athletics? 6. Is ours a frivolous age?

CHAPTER XII

THE GOSPEL AND HOME-MAKING

HERE and there a novelist is found with the courage to begin the story where romances in books commonly end, when the proposal is made and the wedding is fairly in sight. But this is a very daring proceeding, indeed, as daring as it is unusual, for who will wish to amend the ancient and honorable ending of all "good" stories, "and they lived happily ever after"?

Whether we wish an amendment or not, life mocks our sentimental optimism, and insists that the wedding is not the climax which the story books pretend, but is rather the beginning of love's serious narrative. If we thought of marriage more as a beginning and less as a finality, it would, in a multitude of cases, prove much more final than it is.

The divorce problem is one of the largest problems of our day. Much is written concerning it that is wise and strong. But there is great need of recognizing more that the root of the divorce evil is farther back than many of us go. Easy divorce comes of easy marriage, and the frequency of divorce is to a much greater extent than most of us

admit, the result of false thinking and foolish acting with regard to courtship and marriage.

Men and women will never stay married until they get married with more sense than most of them show to-day. The wonder is not that divorce is common, and that efforts to prevent it in a legal way are so often abortive. The much greater wonder is that divorce is not vastly more common than it is, and that so little of marital misery gets aired out in the courts. Not but that there are many happy marriages, for undoubtedly there are. As Mr. Dooley very shrewdly remarked, "Doin' good ain't news." And "bein' good ain't news" either. One unhappy marriage will attract more public attention than ten happy unions. But that there are so many happy unions is much more due to the grace of God than it is to the good sense of the average young man or young woman who is seeking a life companion. And the amount of good sense actually shown by the average man and woman after marriage is out of all proportion to the very modest amount commonly exercised before. Nearly every man who is happily married will admit in his more candid moments that he owes it more to the preventing providence of God than he does to his own wisdom and judgment.

Most young people, even Christian young people, look upon marriage as a good deal of a joke. There is much to encourage this most mischievous view in the popular attitude toward married life.

More jokes are cracked at the expense of marriage than on any other theme. Witticism and cynicism flourish everywhere in the funny columns of the newspapers and in familiar conversation whenever courtship and marriage and divorce are to the front. Husbands and wives who are sincerely fond of each other often cover their real affection by cheap cynicisms and insulting witticisms in the presence of other people. This whole attitude toward marriage is nothing less than wicked, and has very much to do with the appalling decadence of happy and wholesome family life among us. There is no finer field for the exercise of Christian good sense and for insistence upon the mind of Christ to-day than in the domain of ordinary conversation and conduct with respect to love and marriage. Every Christian ought to set his face against this fatal facetiousness, and ought to do his utmost to raise every reference to the marriage relation in his presence and all his own thinking concerning it to the high level of decency and seriousness and reverential regard. For, if there is anything serious in this world of ours and anything sacred in human relationships, courtship and marriage and family life belong to the very innermost court of the temple, and ought not to be profaned by the football play of careless feet. I question whether the unclean talk of many men concerning the marriage relation does as much harm as the cheap witticisms and cynical slurs upon marriage which are so com-

mon with better people, and the moonshine of sentiment through which the whole matter is viewed by the great majority of the youth of our day.

Apart from direct dedication of one's self to the immediate service of the kingdom of God among men, home-making is the biggest business in which any man and woman can engage. It has more to do with individual happiness and ordinarily more to do with social usefulness than any other relation of life. A prominent railroad manager called the attention of a friend who was riding with him to the quick whistle of the engine as they passed a certain farmhouse standing back from the road. At the same time a woman appeared at the door and waved her apron above her head. "That is the engineer's wife," remarked the railroad manager. "He always salutes her when his run brings him past his home, and she always returns the salute." And then, he added thoughtfully, "I like it. I have noticed that a happy home life is back of nearly every first-class workman. A man who has a good home life is worth more to his employer."

And though every man who has a good wife may well confess that she is "from the Lord," and justly attribute much of his fortune to the guiding goodness of God, it is nevertheless true that the exercise of good hard common sense brings nowhere surer and larger returns than it does when exercised with regard to getting and guiding a home. For, in this matter, quite as certainly as with respect to any

work of a man's life, it is preeminently true that "God helps those who help themselves."

Generally speaking, it is better to marry than not to marry. The solitary life tends to selfishness, unless it is devoted to some large social service, or is saved by some exceptional devotion to other family relationships. Very seldom should these other family relationships be allowed to stand between a young man and woman who are wisely mated, except in a temporary way. Parents are sometimes painfully short-sighted in requiring of their children the sacrifice of their own happiness and welfare for a less duty at home. I have known a father, and a prominent Christian man at that, to sacrifice all the future of his daughter for the sake of a passing emergency in the home when he himself allowed his own desire for a second union to set aside his own first responsibility to the younger children of his first wife. There is need on all sides of real and rare unselfishness in such situations, and neither a young man nor a young woman ought to be in such haste to satisfy sentimental impatience as to disregard the reasonable demands upon them of the home from which they come. But the right to marry and to have a home of their own belongs to all young people at a reasonable age, and there is much self-sacrifice which is neither good for those who offer it nor yet for those who receive it. The right to live one's own life in the world is usually more than a right; it is a duty,

and it is too often set aside for some smaller good. Even the Master specifically allowed that "for this cause," because "it is not good for man to be alone" and man and woman were made "in the beginning" for each other, "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife." The home instinct is born of God, and ought not to be lightly set aside by any man. But it is better not to marry than to marry wrong. "Marriage to a good woman," says the old proverb, "is a harbor in the tempest; to a bad woman it is a tempest in the harbor." And it is worse, if possible, for the woman who is wedded to a bad man, for the man unfortunately married spends relatively much less time in his "harbor" than the woman must needs spend. His home life is much to him, but her home life is more to her, and the better woman she is, the more it is likely to be. Better a parrot and a kitten for her sole companions in old age than a lifelong bondage to a fool or a brute in the guise of a man. If women were less eager to marry, many of them would marry much more wisely than they do.

A man who married twice, and married well in both instances, gave this glimpse afterward of his heart experience. "I prayed for the wife of my youth before I ever met her. Perhaps it was visionary from the standpoint of some, but I reasoned it out after this fashion: In our home, although there was much merriment and frequent

joking, we were none of us allowed to tell any story or make any remark which reflected unfavorably upon marriage. Father simply would not have it. I grew up with the conviction that marriage was the right and reasonable thing for every normal man, and that it was a matter of utmost consequence. One day it came over me that if I ever married, the woman I would marry was doubtless alive somewhere, and forming her character, as I was forming mine. I was about seventeen, but as I had dedicated myself to a considerable course of study, and did not mean to marry till that course was finished, I had no idea who the woman might be. But I remember distinctly carrying the matter to God in prayer, as I carried all the affairs of my life, and asking that God would bless her and have her in his keeping and make me worthy of her. I met her a year or two afterward, though it was not for years after that we married, but I have always felt that the happiness of the twice seven years we walked together began with that boyish prayer before I so much as knew her name. And when she had been in heaven for years, and I chose again, I chose with the same sense of a divine fellowship upon me. I have never done anything in my life which I measured more carefully, or which was to me in the very act more utterly an act of religious devotion than when God called me to choose a woman to walk with me and share my life."

This is not only real religion, but the highest sense. A man's wife is either no real wife at all or she is the very heart of his heart and the life of his life. To choose her carelessly is to invite upon himself the greatest disaster which can fall upon a man short of the loss of his own character. And he will find it no easy matter to keep his character if he makes serious mistake as to her's. All that a man buys is as nothing to his choice of a wife. Better far that he should all his life spend his money with his eyes and ears shut than that he should choose a wife without the utmost exercise of his best sense, and then an earnest prayer for the saving grace of God to preserve him against himself. And the woman has need of even greater caution, for the average woman is better qualified to make at least a tolerable wife than is the average man to make a decent husband. The average woman outdares Columbus when she lets loose from the moorings of her own home and ventures out upon the matrimonial sea. Yet many a girl picks out a husband with less caution than she would exercise in buying a spring hat.

A man ought not only to be careful in choosing a wife, but he ought to be even more careful to make himself worthy of her. It is the height of impertinence for any man to ask any woman to marry him unless he is all that he might be in effort and intention, at least. The colossal conceit of many a young man in asking a woman to give

herself to his care and keeping when he is so wholly irresponsible that he is not fit to be trusted with the care and keeping of a dog and a wheelbarrow is enough to excite the laughter of angels, if it were not so much more provocative of tears. Would that every young man, before he proposes, might read often those rebuking words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, speaking for her sex and not for herself:

“ Do you know you have asked for the
costliest thing

Ever made by the Hand above?

A woman’s heart, and a woman’s hand,
And a woman’s wonderful love.”

And all that follows. It might, at least, impress him for the moment with the marvelous confidence which any man has who takes a woman’s life and love as his own; a venture, indeed, so daring that “fools rush in” where angels might well “fear to tread,” and where no man should tread who is not fit.

There is no greater victory that the gospel can have in modern life than the redemption of the home. It is more important because more fundamental than the conquest of politics and business and education and literature for Christ. These will all follow upon a truly Christian home life, or will grow easily and naturally out of the same stem of pure purpose and finest self-culture. Nor is the

redemption of the home a matter of marrying at this or that age, with this or that amount of money, or with so much or so little regard for social lines. It is much more than all these matters which must be determined severally by careful exercise of the best sense with regard to all the circumstances.

Specific advice here is of little worth, except as it applies to specific circumstances, and even then it is worth much or little, according to the measure of a man's independence of it. If he has not sense to make it needless, it is very doubtful whether he will have sense to use it. The redemption of home life means a larger valuation upon the home and home-building first of all, a valuation which will manifest itself in the highest type of seriousness. It means more exercise of Christian common sense upon the part of young people, especially in choosing their companions and partners. It means much of Christian forbearance and forgiveness in making the inevitable adjustments after marriage is entered upon. It means the daily application of the gospel to daily living under the severest test conditions oftentimes, and always with regard to the highest type of Christian conduct. Home-building requires the very best material to be had in the way of individual Christian character. And it is worth all the cost of it, for he who builds and maintains a really Christian home has established a kind of heavenly experimental station on earth, a little kingdom of God which is the best analogy we know of

for that universal and everlasting kingdom which is to be.



Quiz

1. What is one of the commonest causes of divorce to-day?
2. Is there any justification for the light and humorous fashion in which most of us refer to love and marriage?
3. What is cynicism?
4. What are the principal reasons which favor marriage as the normal state of men and women?
5. What apt comparison is used to illustrate a good marriage?
6. What is fairly involved in a man's making himself worthy to be a husband?
7. In a woman's making herself worthy to be a wife?
8. What relation is there between the building of the Christian home and the social welfare?

Topics for Further Study

1. The growth of the divorce evil, here and in foreign lands, causes and cure.
2. The influence of the popular novel in stimulating or correcting false views of love and marriage.
3. The value of the church as a meeting ground for the sexes.
4. Does the broadening of woman's sphere work toward more intimate and helpful companionship in the home, or away from it?
5. Some notable instances of Christian marriage.

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